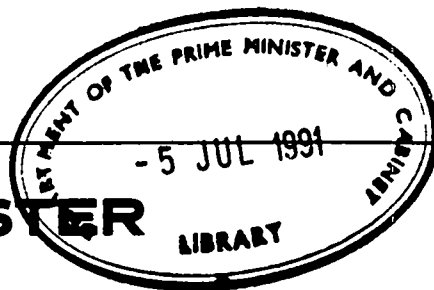




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PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
PARLIAMENTARY DINNER IN HONOUR OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, MR TURGUT OZAL
CANBERRA - 9 MAY 1991**

President Ozal and Mrs Ozal,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Tonight marks a watershed in the history of relations between Australia and Turkey.

Mr President, you are the first head of State of the Republic of Turkey to visit this country, and as such you are a particularly welcome guest in Australia and in Canberra. It is indeed an honour to have you here, and it is a pleasure to be able to return the hospitality that you, and the people of Turkey, so generously extended to me and to the large party of Australians who visited your country in April 1990.

That visit, as you know, was centred on the 75th Anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign.

With the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party, I was privileged to visit the shores of Anzac Cove and the heights of Lone Pine - and to do so in the distinguished company of a number of Australian veterans of the Gallipoli campaign - original ANZACS who despite their advanced years embody still the courage, the endurance, the good humour and the sense of service that today represents, for all Australians, the best of the ANZAC tradition.

Mr President, Turkish and Australian soldiers endured great hardship and made great sacrifices in the almost unimaginably difficult campaign that began on 25 April 1915.

It is commonplace to speak of such campaigns as 'senseless' - and certainly, we must ensure that never again will the nations of the world engage in such costly and short-sighted conflict.

But it is clear too that those of us on whose behalf that terrible price was paid not only honour our predecessors - we also recognise that their sacrifice was not in vain.

For Australians, Gallipoli was our coming of age as a nation - a traumatic experience that taught us, and proved to the world, the quality of our character and the magnitude of our potential.

For Turkey, the campaign was also a milestone on the road to nationhood; the leadership and skill displayed by Kemal Ataturk in defending his homeland at Gallipoli paved the way for his building of the modern state of Turkey.

It may seem paradoxical that a war should lie at the base of the warm and generous friendship which now exists between us. But the strong bond between our two countries is a tangible fact of contemporary life, not merely an artefact of history.

That truth was so vividly shown last year at Gallipoli, personified by the emotional reconciliation by veterans of our two armies.

Mr President, it was because of your own role, through that visit, in developing relations between Turkey and Australia, that you were invested yesterday as an Honorary Companion of the Order of Australia. We congratulate you on that award.

Mr President,

On Anzac Day this year, we in Australia saluted our veterans of another war - the Gulf War.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August last year posed a direct threat to the basic principles of international order which we uphold. It threatened to take from our grasp the great hopes which we held, in the wake of the Cold War's conclusion, for a saner and safer world.

Saddam Hussein violated those principles - but he faced a world newly but tenaciously committed to upholding them.

It was in the most basic sense an issue that affected all nations - Australia, distant from the Middle East/Gulf region; Turkey, immediately proximate to it and a neighbour of Iraq.

Australians are proud of the contribution that we made to the success of the multinational response to this challenge.

Proud as we are, Mr President, it is a matter for deep satisfaction to be able to tell you how much we appreciated and respected the contribution of Turkey to our common cause.

As a front-line state, Turkey's role in achieving a successful outcome was critical; its support for the multilateral coalition was vital.

By actively supporting the sanctions regime imposed on Iraq, Turkey suffered much more than most - in particular, through the crucial closure of the pipeline carrying Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean. Later, when it came to war, Turkey's assistance to allied military efforts helped ensure their success, and helped shorten the conflict.

Although the war itself is over, there remains much to be done before we are able to say that peace and stability has returned to the region.

The spirit of multinational cooperation which reversed Iraq's aggression in Kuwait must be sustained and entrenched if we are effectively to tackle and to resolve the deepseated problems of the region and of the global community.

Foremost in our minds is the plight of the refugees fleeing persecution in Iraq. The outflow of refugees from Saddam's regime provided yet another challenge to the world. Australia has played its part in the global endeavour to contain the massive dimensions of this human tragedy. Again, however, it must be recognised: Turkey's contribution to the handling of this new crisis has been vital.

Beyond this profound humanitarian challenge lies the great question of how to so order the affairs of the world as to build on the progress of recent years - the conclusion of the Cold War; the warmer superpower relationship; the negotiated agreements for disarmament; the resolution of a number of regional conflicts; the upholding of the Charter of the United Nations in the Gulf War.

Middle power diplomacy, which we both practise, will be a key element of the foundations upon which such progress can be constructed - and Turkey, at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East, is well placed to contribute to both regions during the years ahead.

There is cause to hope that the spirit of cooperation witnessed during recent months may pave the way for a broader understanding of the possibilities of cooperation.

But there will be no easy solutions to the long-standing problems which remain.

Mr President:

Without doubt one such issue is the dispute in Cyprus. As we discussed in our talks this morning, this is an issue on which Australia and Turkey differ.

As you know, Mr President, Australia has consistently upheld UN Security Council resolutions 541, 550 and 649. We uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. We have consistently expressed opposition to the unilateral declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1983.

We have also been extensively involved in efforts to restore peace in Cyprus through our assistance to the United Nations peacekeeping force. Our position is that all parties should achieve a solution in accordance with the mediation of the United Nations Secretary-General.

Mr President, we fully recognise your important personal role in these issues and the consistent support that you have expressed for a resolution of this problem in accordance with the principles articulated by the United Nations Secretary-General. We recognise Turkey's interest in and influence on this question, and we urge all parties to participate constructively and openly in inter-communal negotiations.

In our discussions this morning I also raised Australia's concerns about reports relating to human rights in Turkey. As you know Australia takes a consistent approach to human rights world wide.

While noting our concerns, I also acknowledge your own personal efforts to improve human rights in your country, including the recent package of important legislative reforms, which we see as an important positive move on this issue.

Mr President

Yesterday you inspected the Snowy Mountains Scheme, to see whether it can help you with the Greater Anatolian Project underway in Turkey.

Australia has the experience and expertise in engineering, irrigation and agricultural technologies available to assist Turkey in that project if you wish. There is the potential for benefits to be derived by both countries. Austrade has already received the support of the Turkish Government in assisting with the provision of services and technology to the project.

In trade too, there is the potential for further expansion. Both our Governments have achieved substantial restructuring of our national economies, to make our countries more efficient and effective competitors in international markets. I pay tribute to your own leadership in the process of reforming the Turkish economy.

The liberalisation of international markets is essential to both our economies. Like Australia, Turkey has suffered from the distortion of third country markets, resulting from EC and US export subsidies. We are well aware of the potential for stagnation of the world economy, and for the strangulation of our own economies, should these policies continue. We urge EC leaders to show the political will and strength to reach a satisfactory resolution of the Uruguay Round. The wellbeing of both our countries depend on this.

Mr President,

For all the importance of the other issues I have discussed so far, the links between our two countries are best exemplified and maintained by the presence in Australia of a large and vibrant Turkish community.

Australia is proud that, in particular since World War II, we have attracted to our shores millions of new settlers from more than 130 nations around the world.

In 1967 Turkey and Australia signed an agreement to facilitate the migration of Turks to Australia. Some 40,000 Turkish people have since come to settle in Australia.

Let me say Mr President that these new members of the Australian community are welcome among us.

We have been enriched by their contribution to our multicultural society. And we respect the way in which they have contributed to our society and economy while also keeping alive the traditions of the Turkish language and culture.

That thousands of Turkish settlers have realised their dreams for themselves and their children in this country, while carefully guarding their immense Turkish heritage, should be, and is, a matter of great satisfaction to the vast majority of the Australian people.

Mr President,

Australia is truly a land of immigrants. Well over one in five Australians were born in another country. Over one in ten Australians came to Australia from a country where English is not the principal language. Overseas-born Australians and their children now form some 40 per cent of our population.

Within this diversity, it is important that all Australians be able to express and share their individual cultural heritage, to practise their religion, to speak their language. It is also important that all Australians be treated equally, without disadvantage because of race, culture, religion, language, gender or other reason.

Within this diversity, too, it is important that all Australians unite around an overriding commitment to Australia, to its institutions, its interests and its future. There must be understanding and trust between our many communities in Australia as we work and live together.

Integral to this vision of a multicultural society is the political freedom of all Australians to express their views - including their views about events in their old homelands.

But we do not see Australia as a place in which communal rivalries and divisions of the old world should be played out in a new community.

Certainly, Australia does not conduct its foreign policy on any basis other than what we judge to be best for Australia and for all Australians.

Mr President,

I have looked forward to your visit since my visit to Turkey last year. I welcome this opportunity to discuss world events with you and to advance the relationship between our countries.

In once more welcoming you I express the hope that the friendship between Turkey and Australia will continue to prosper and to deliver increasing benefits to both our peoples and countries.

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