

Distinguished Participants,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Distinguished President and members of the Center for Strategic and International Studies for their warm welcome and hospitality on my behalf and on behalf of my delegation.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to be here at such an esteemed institute, and to address to such a distinguished audience and to share my opinions.

Distinguished Guests,

We are here, together with a diverse delegation, consisting of members from public institutions, non-governmental organizations, private sector companies and press.

I believe that this visit will create significant opportunities for establishing new cooperation areas with the USA, **which has had an important place in Turkey's political, economic, military and strategic relations throughout the history.**

Distinguished Guests,

As you all know, **"TURKEY, THE BRIDGE OF CIVILIZATIONS"** connecting Europe, Asia and Africa, is one of the most strategic countries in the world due to its geopolitical position.

Turkey is a strong bridge, not only between the Eastern and Western civilizations, but also between the religions, both for the neighbor countries, and as well as for the whole world.

Our country, which has been a cradle for many civilizations and celestial religions, has a historical and cultural heritage ensuring the transfer of tolerance and brotherhood from the past to the present.

In particular, the new formations brought with the "globalization" process, further increase the strategic importance of Turkey, in the world.

Turkey has a relatively young population when compared to most of the EU countries and the USA. More than 70% of the total Turkish population is younger than 30 years old.

In Turkey, where positive developments have been observed in terms of skilled labor in recent years, 1 out of 4 persons is somehow 'student'. This is a strong indication that, the future prospects of Turkey will be formed by, the qualified, and educated young generation.

Distinguished guests,

Turkey is located at the heart of a region, neighboring more than one billion of world population, and producing more than one quarter of the world's outputs.

As in the other fields, Turkey has made a great progress in the field of economy during our governmental stage. While Turkey had a GDP of USD 145 billions in 2001, this figure increased about 3 times and therefore reached up to USD 380 billions during the term of the current Government.

As the result of economic progress achieved in the last 3 years, national income per capita has increased about 100 %. The inflation rate, which is the most important indicator of the economy, has recently been cut down to single digit from 3 digits. Furthermore, projection of the inflation rate for the next two years is about 5%.

While Turkey had a trade volume of USD 72 billions in 2001, this figure has reached up to about USD 200 billions today.

When we look at the figures regarding the economic growth, we realize an annual growth rate of 7.7% between the years of 2002 and 2005. The annual average growth rate of Turkish economy within the period of 1992 – 2002 was, however, only about 2.8%.

GNP per capita has doubled in the last 3 years and it will again be doubled in 2010 compared to the year 2005.

Based on the data of the World Bank, Today's Turkey is the;

2nd fastest growing economy...
16th biggest economy...
22nd biggest exporter ...
14th biggest importer...
among 127 countries in the world.

With a dynamic economy, a large domestic market, a competitive industry and skilled labor force, Turkey presents numerous opportunities for the foreign investors.

Today, Turkey has a “**Functional Market Economy**” approved all around the world. Hence, the expectation of our country from the US government and the investors is, to choose Turkey, as an exportation base within the region, and to encourage their private sectors to invest in Turkey.

Endowed with so many natural beauties, Turkey is a truly God-given tourism-paradise, one could enjoy four different seasons at the same time.

Currently, about 20 million visitors come to our country, annually. The 2010 projection of Turkish tourism sector, however, is to reach up to about 30 million visitors. Turkey is a unique country in this field, with invaluable tourism diversity.

Distinguished Participants,

Turkey is located in close proximity to 70% of the world's proven energy resources.

New pipelines, which will carry Caspian oil and gas, to Western markets are expected to pass through Turkey's territory. Linking Europe and Asia, through energy corridors are the main tenets of Turkey's Eurasian vision...

Expectedly, about 6-7 % of global oil supply will transit Turkey in a year...

Distinguished Friends,

Turkey is favorable for production of many crops, thanks to its geographical conditions, rich lands and climatic conditions. Half of the lands of the country are occupied by agricultural activities.

The small and fragmented agricultural enterprises in Turkish agriculture are about to be replaced by larger and integrated modern structures. Productivity is also improved by using new technologies and methods.

Turkish agricultural sector has a potential of feeding the whole country; and agricultural exportation increases day by day. Thus, agriculture can feed more population with less employment in the sector.

While the growth rate in agriculture was 2.5% in 2003, this figure was raised to 5.6% in 2005. GNP and GNP per capita in agriculture have made a significant increase in recent years.

With the Agricultural Strategy Document prepared by our Government, medium-term policies that will be implemented between the years 2006 and 2010 were specified. In this document we aimed at;

- Implementation of support instruments without detrimental affects on the market conditions,
- Arrangements in parallel with the EU and WTO Agricultural Agreements,
- Consideration of agriculture and rural development in a complementary approach,
- Completion of agricultural institutionalization and organization; and
a competitive agricultural policy.

Our main approach in agriculture is to reduce the role of the public services in agriculture as well as in other fields and to ensure food safety and exchange of information between the producers and the consumers.

Within this framework, 16 state-agricultural-enterprises out of 38 were opened to the private sector by the Government. Other

enterprises will be opened to the domestic and foreign investors; therefore, these enterprises will be turned into “**Agricultural Incubation Centers**”. We will also turn our agricultural research institutes under the body of our Ministry into “**Agricultural Technology Improvement Centers**”.

The State will have a role of paving the way, for the private sector instead of competing with it, in the agricultural sector.

Today we are implementing an agricultural reform program aiming to reorganize agricultural subsidies, to ensure supply-demand balance, to create a more competitive agricultural sector and to reduce the government intervention.

Today, Turkey has an advantaged place in the world in terms of agriculture with its;

rich natural and human resources,
lands, on which relatively less chemicals are used,
rich in biological diversity,
favorable climatic conditions and vast agricultural lands...

Therefore, thanks to this potential, Turkey is the;

1st producer in dried apricot, hazelnut and fig production,
5th largest producer in food legumes, cotton, tobacco, olive, raisin and several vegetable and fruit varieties,
10th largest producer in wheat, barley, almond, citrus fruits and tea production,

in the world...

In addition, Anatolia is an important gene center. Of about 12 000 plant taxons in Turkey, 32% is endemic.

Distinguished Guests,

The biggest asset of Turkey is its young and educated human resources.

Turkey is one of the leading countries in Europe on sending students to overseas, including to the USA, for post graduate study. In this field, Turkey is the 5th country in the world.

While the share of the education expenses in GNP is 7.3 % in Turkey, the average is 6 % in OECD member countries.

Total number of students in Turkey is 16 millions and this figure represents 23 % of the total population. The share of the Scientific Researches in GNP was 0.8 % in 2000, this share will be increased to 2% in near future. **During the mission of our Government, the Ministry of National Education has received the highest share from the national budget.**

Distinguished Friends,

Here I would like to underline that we consider the education of our children, whom we regard as the guarantee of our future, as the main achievement factor of our economic and social development.

Today, the new mission ahead of our businessmen, academicians, public and private sectors is to get **“Integrated with the World”** and our vision is the whole geography **“from One Polar to the Other”**.

Distinguished Friends,

We live together with our different identities, cultures and traditions.

Turkey is the sole country in the world having close relations with the Central Asian, Near Eastern, Middle Eastern, African and most of the European countries.

Turkey, adopting the democratic values of the West but having strong ties with the Islamic world, has achieved the hard one by catching the Western standards without making any concession from the Eastern culture.

In addition, Turkey, with a democratic, secular and social state structure, is a source of inspiration for so many countries desiring modernization and democratic way of life.

After a serious and comprehensive reform process, the EU-Turkey accession negotiations were started in October 2005. The decision on starting negotiations is a historical decision not only for Turkey but also for the EU.

We do not regard the European Union, just as an economic union. We perceive this Union as a unity for peace, welfare and freedom within the framework of universal values.

We think that the European Union will gain new dimensions for the peace and welfare of the mankind upon membership of our country.

We believe that the European Union will add **so much to our country**, and **our country will do so** for the European Union in economic, social and cultural terms.

Membership of Turkey to the European Union will show to the world and especially to the Muslim societies that the East and the West, and Islam and the other religions can live together and survive in peace around common values.

The primary objectives of Turkish foreign policy are, to create a secure, peaceful, stable, prosperous and cooperative regional and international environment.

Laws and rules are also the main principles in our international relations. We strongly believe we are originating from such a civilization that, **“There is no Oppression; but Rules! no Persecution, but Law!”** in that civilization.

Turkey’s vision for the 21st century is to be;

- A geopolitical key country,
- A modern secular democracy,
- A vibrant successfully implementing reforms,
- A promising economic power,

- An energy hub for oil and gas transfer,
- A promoter for regional and international stability,
- A land of opportunity for investors...

Undoubtedly, Turkey is a mediator for integration of cultures and civilizations.

Today what the world needs is to; "**STAND UNITED and ALLY CIVILIZATIONS**"; these are also the two main pillars for the future prospects of Turkey.

Distinguished Guests,

Now, I would like to talk a little bit about the Turkish agriculture and one of the most ambitious agricultural development projects, called GAP, which is undertaken by Turkish national capital, national efforts and national motivation.

I was **born** in a city called DİYARBAKIR located in the Southeastern Anatolia Region. This region is also called as Upper Mesopotamia and irrigated by the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

This region is also known as the most productive lands of the world where agriculture was first initiated in the history. The saplings irrigated by the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris vitalizing the first seed have always become crops.

I am also talking about a region where different **cultures, civilizations, languages, religions and colors** come and live together in peace.

To struggle with terrorism, the Republic of Turkey carries out one of the most important, sustainable and human-oriented regional development projects in Southeastern Anatolia Region.

With this project at regional level, we plan;

- a 445% increase in GDP,

- a 209% increase in income per capita
- employment for 3.8 million for a region housing 7 million people,
- irrigation for 1.7 million hectares of agricultural land,
- 27 billion kilowatt/h energy production.

The total cost of the project is USD 32 billions and USD 17 billions, corresponding to 54% of realization, has already been spent since 1989. According to the 'Master Plan', the project will be finished by the end of year 2010.

Distinguished Friends,

After this huge physical development project, I would like to touch up on our human development philosophy.

My main approach to "**FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION**" is to tolerate the opinions of the others. I, as a Minister of a country that has made a great progress in recent years, believe that you are aware of our sensitivity and determination about the issue.

However, it is obvious that all freedom should be enjoyed with a certain awareness of responsibility. In accordance with the law for international human rights, even freedom of expression is not an absolute right and conservation of the rights of other people is subjected to several restrictions.

It is emphasized in 3rd paragraph of Article 19 of UN Civil and Political Rights Contract that freedom of expression should be enjoyed with a particular responsibility.

In accordance with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, freedom of expression may be restricted in cases of direct encouragement and provocation of terrorism and violence; incitement of antagonism and hatred feelings, or attack to the religious values.

Therefore;

No one has the right to assault at the other's values. Because, freedom has a limit, no freedom is infinite.

Thanks to these historical experiences, Turkey is the guarantee of peace and brotherhood in the region.

Distinguished Guests,

When the countries approach each other, unfortunately, peace and comfort have not equally been maintained. Today, we regretfully see that we just focus on differences instead of common values of the human being. Therefore, **'one unhappiness, strikes more than 1000 happiness.'**

Today, blind fanaticism emphasizing just differences rather than common values, has unfortunately caused, some kind of war in 150 countries in the world.

We need to keep in mind that fanaticism is only to see life and justice rights for oneself but spare them from others.

No matter in which country we live, and no matter what we believe; everybody on earth has to struggle against fanaticism. Because, we are responsible not only for ourselves, but also for each living being's rights.

This is the main perception of our civilization.

Distinguished Friends,

We have excitingly been working on, moving Turkey forward to accomplish the ideals and goals, with the enthusiasm of the first day.

If the velocity of time does not make you dazzled...

If you are not exhausted...

If your power and energy sufficient not only for your current position but also for a longer run,

...then you are the hope... you are the future....

Distinguished Friends,

“TERRORISM IS A PHENOMENON THAT YOU COULD NEVER KNOW HOW, WHO, WHERE AND WHEN WILL BE STRIKED”.

Isolation of terrorism is only possible by promoting the human rights and freedom, so that it can be eradicated from the society.

In a global world, it is essential to maintain unity within a diversity carrying norms and definite cultures.

In the literature of our party, the concept of **“other”** does not exist.

All our effort is to promote **JUSTICE** for development of Turkey.

We never disregard the unity of Turkey and never will we...

We are working for peace and security for everyone and we are not the government of only the ones who vote for our party but also of the whole 73 million Turkish citizens.

We know very well how Turkish nation suffered from political acts, formation of divergent groups, polarization and discrimination.

Our nation, which has been through these harsh experiences in the past, is also aware of this bitter fact.

“THE GOAL OF TERRORISM IS TO DESTROY STABILITY AND PEACE...”

JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY (AKP) HAS THREE RED LINES.

First, no ethnic discrimination, **Second**, no regional discrimination, **Third**, no religious discrimination,

Our basic philosophy is to love all creatures for the sake of the creator.

Justice and Development Party is a political party embracing all colors and values of Turkey. The prospects and worries of our citizens have become our concern regardless of their thought and life style. As it always is, we have found out the '**naked truth**' together. These common grounds have strengthened our party and brought us to governmental power.

I know that all great achievements commence with fancy dreams. However, it is also essential to work faithfully to convert these dreams into permanent successes.

As a nation, our future target for Turkey is to;

Be totally digressed from economic problems,
Achieve sustainable development, and
Become a social state.

We have the necessary desire and self-confidence to achieve these goals.

With the power of the youth, natural and historical beauties, political significance in the region and rapidly growing economy, Turkey aims to be among the top-ten-leading countries of the 21st century, in the world.

I would like to thank you all for your patience and wish the human kind a more tolerant world dominated by peace and hope.