

BRITISH/TURKISH RELATIONS

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The title of my talk, as advertised, is Turkish/British relations. I would like to consider the subject not so much from the point of view of the day-to-day conduct of those relations but within the overall context of developments since the Second World War; and first I should like to say a word about the change which has come over Britain's position in the world during that time, because our relations with you, as with so many other countries, are largely governed by that change.

Great Britain

Britain emerged from the Second World War victorious and still at the head of a large overseas empire, but having suffered serious damage in terms of both human and material loss. British industry was badly run down; our overseas assets and investments had largely been spent; we had serious balance of payments crises and difficult social problems to deal with at home. Above all we had to recognise that in the new world of super powers Britain had neither the industrial nor the financial and military resources to maintain her empire in its pre-war form. Nor was continued Colonial rule likely to be acceptable for much longer to the peoples who formed that empire. So we began the process of adaptation to our new situation. From 1947 onwards with the granting of independence to India and Pakistan, the Union Jack was pulled down over one former Colony after another until today there are only a few

islands left and the two mainland outposts of Hong Kong and Gibraltar. Meanwhile we in Britain saw our future increasingly in terms of (a) our very close association with the United States of America developed through a common language and cultural heritage and our alliance in two world wars; (b) a growing involvement with the countries of western Europe culminating in our becoming full members of the EEC in 1972; (c) our membership, as one of the founders, of the NATO Alliance, which would provide the essential framework within which the security of the West, including our own, would be maintained against the threat from the Soviet Union. Those three elements, the United States, NATO and the European Community, have become the essential pivots around which our external relations have been built. There is also the Commonwealth, into which our empire has evolved; not a bloc, but a gathering of nations, which, while pursuing their own policies, meet, talk, exchange ideas and maintain an enormous number of mutual links.

I do not want to suggest that this change from imperial power to one among several equal members of the European Community and of the NATO Alliance was achieved without difficulty, or overnight. The process was indeed difficult. There were many hesitations and mistakes. Dean Acheson, one of the United States outstanding Secretaries of State, commented that Britain had lost an empire but failed to find a role. He was right in the first part of that statement but premature in the second. In an age where we expect things to happen very quickly he failed perhaps to appreciate that a transition such as my country has had to undergo was bound to take years. It has in fact been achieved in 35 years which, historically, is a short period.

We should also remember that during that period we, along with others, have been experiencing a second industrial revolution. The growth of major new economies, the development of technology, the inter-linking of commercial and financial markets throughout the world and the emergence of a whole array of international economic bodies, such as the IMF, the World

Bank, OECD, the GATT, etc., have created a new world which would have seemed totally strange to our grandfathers in Britain and Turkey. These developments mean that all of us are interconnected. What happens on the foreign exchange markets affects you and us at the same time. None of us can be immune from the fluctuations of world trade. These developments in the world economy have profoundly affected relationships between nations and the way in which those relationships have to be conducted.

Britain and Turkey

Where does all this leave Britain and Turkey? First, I suggest that the developments I have described have set the framework within which Turkish/British relations have to be conducted. Kemal Atatürk, I believe, not only laid down as the cardinal principle of Turkish foreign policy that she should become firmly integrated into the Western world, but within that policy declared that a major objective should be friendship between Britain and Turkey. Partly that was because Atatürk did not trust the dictators who were then ruling Italy and Germany; partly because he recognised that Great Britain was the most powerful naval power in Europe at the time, maintaining a major fleet in the Mediterranean; partly perhaps because he admired Britain's stability and political institutions. The first two of those reasons have disappeared; the third remains. But even in a changed world the thrust of Atatürk's thinking has continued to provide the basis of Turkish foreign policy, namely a firm orientation towards the West and within that particularly close links with the United States, which has taken Britain's place as the leading naval power in the Mediterranean and far surpassed Britain as a global super-power; also with Germany, the leading industrial power in Western Europe, and with the United Kingdom.

An essential element linking those relationships has been defence. Very soon after the Second World War Britain recognised the need for an alliance which would enable the Western world to withstand the threat from the Soviet Union. Turkey

too, with good reason, understood that threat and in 1952 joined NATO to become an indispensable part of the Alliance. A common perception of the risks of Soviet expansion led to an extension of the Alliance system in which both Britain and Turkey shared, first in the form of the Baghdad Pact and then, after 1958, in the Central Treaty Organisation with its headquarters in Ankara. Events have brought about the end of CENTO. But the principles underlying our joint membership of both NATO and CENTO have remained valid. The task of defence against the Soviet Union cannot be left simply to the United States. Turkey has a part to play and so has Britain and the fact that we are both continuing to play those parts to the limit of our resources constitutes a bond of the firmest kind between us.

Defence is only one aspect, if a very important one, in our relationship. But it could not survive on its own. As I have said earlier in this talk, Britain has seen its future developing not only around a defensive alliance, NATO, but through ever closer economic and political relationships with the countries of Europe. Just as defence has grown beyond the capacity of any single country to provide, so economic wellbeing and prosperity can only be achieved through international co-operation and integration. Britain for a time perhaps in the 1950s thought that she could stand outside this trend. Turkey only more recently may have done so too. Self-sufficiency and the development of industry behind high protective tariffs were for a long time the keynotes of Turkish economic policy. But Britain discovered that she could not go it alone and after much heart searching opted to join the European Community. Turkey too, it seems to me, has read the signs correctly. She obtained associate status with the European Community twenty years ago and now, particularly in the last three years, and even more so as a result of the policies announced by Mr Özal in the last few weeks, is showing a real determination to open up her economy to the outside world. It is a bold step. But it is one which I believe in the long run must be of advantage to Turkey and certainly will add to the links which Britain and Turkey share. We want to see Turkey not only as a valued

partner in defence but as an economic and political partner as well.

The economic field contains many pitfalls. Turkey's relations with the European Community are not easy. I think it can be said that in my country Turkey has a real friend within the Community. But we too at times have had to look to our own interests sometimes at the expense of Turkey. Turkey, for example, has a new and efficient textile industry in search of markets. Britain has an old textile industry which has been badly hit by the world recession. 700 textile firms have closed and over 200.000 jobs have been lost. We have felt compelled to protect our industry by supporting action within the Community to limit access of Turkish textiles to the British market. But these are difficulties which can over a period be overcome. The essential thing in my view is that the relationship between Turkey and the Community should be developed to the mutual advantage of both. It will certainly be the aim of the British Government to seek ways of achieving a real improvement in that relationship in the period ahead.

In considering defence and economics in the context of British/Turkish relations I have placed the emphasis on the multilateral aspects, because in the modern world that is the context in which those issues have to be tackled. I would like to end this talk on a more bilateral note.

We in Britain have watched with interest and, I believe, with understanding the developments which have taken place in Turkey over the last three years. We have recognised that Turkey was faced with a serious crisis. But because of our own democratic traditions we have always looked forward to the day when it would be possible for representative democratic government to be restored to Turkey.

A major step forward has now been taken which we greatly welcome and more will follow. Ever since I came here eleven months ago it has seemed to me that British/Turkish relations were close. I can only think that the return to representative

government here will provide the occasion to improve those relations even further. Of course we will always have our differences. I have mentioned textiles. I could add Cyprus, where we do not agree with Mr Denktash's decision unilaterally to declare independence, not with the Turkish Government's immediate decision to recognise Mr Denktash.

But the channels for discussing those differences are good. They exist at all levels, between Ministers, at my level of Ambassador and through a multiplicity of channels both official and unofficial. Moreover those differences cannot outweigh the much greater interests we have in common. I expect the period ahead to see a strengthening of our co-operation within NATO in the defence field. I expect to see a growing dialogue and co-operation between Turkey and the European Community in which Britain will play her full part. I hope that we shall also see the complete re-integration of Turkey into the Council of Europe. We are certainly working to achieve this. I am also confident that we shall see an increasing participation by British firms in the development of the Turkish economy as that economy opens its doors to the outside world. Perhaps most important of all, I think that we shall see an increasing exchange between ordinary people in both countries, which can only lead to better understanding and friendship. If there is one thing that has struck me since coming here it is the thirst for knowledge of English and the desire to see our exchanges developing in so many fields of education, culture and scientific research. Money is always a problem. There is never enough to go round. But we must do everything we can within the resources available.

Some of these thoughts may sound to you like well - meaning generalities without much real action behind them. I can assure you that this is not the case. All those expectations to which I have just referred are based on firm evidence from what is actually happening now. Of course there are limits to British resources. We cannot do everything we should like to. That is why I spent some time in the first half of this talk

explaining the changes in Britain's position in the world during the past 35 years. We have to work within a multinational framework. But so do you. If we work together realistically we shall greatly benefit each other and the wider causes for which our two countries stand.