

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

TURKEY AND AMERICA:
INDISPENSABLE ALLIES AT A CROSSROADS

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Welcome:

DANIEL BENJAMIN
The Brookings Institution

Sakip Sabanci International Research Award Ceremony

Presentation:

GÜLER SABANCI
Chair, Sabanci Holdings

Remarks by Winner:

CHRISTINE PHILLIOU
Columbia University

Featured Speaker:

AMBASSADOR RICHARD HOLBROOKE
Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

Introductory Remarks:

CARLOS PASCUAL, Vice President and Senior Fellow
Foreign Policy Studies, The Brookings Institution

Moderator:

MARK R. PARRIS, Visiting Fellow
The Brookings Institution

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BENJAMIN: Good morning. I am Daniel Benjamin. I am Director of the Center on the U.S. and Europe here at Brookings, and it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the third annual Sakıp Sabancı lecture. We have a really large crowd I am pleased to say, including many people in overflow, and I think that is an important testament to something that we share with this crowd which is a sense of just how important Turkish affairs are and the relationship between the United States and Turkey.

I especially want to say a word of thanks to Güler Sabancı who is the Chair of Sabancı Holdings, the niece of the man for whom this event is named, and also the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Sabancı University which is our partner in this effort. Güler has really been the driving force behind what we consider the very, very important effort to highlight and strengthen U.S.-Turkish ties through the think tank world and also to educate both the United States and Turkey itself about its past, about its relationships with the world, and about its future.

I am pleased that we also have a very distinguished group of scholars and journalists who have accompanied us here today from Turkey with the Sabancı group. Among them is the Vice Chair of Sabancı University Ahmet Aykac who is sitting there at the end of the podium.

As I think you know, we began this program 3 years ago to honor the memory of Sakıp Sabancı who was really one of the extraordinary figures of modern Turkey. He was of course one of the great industrialists and businessmen of his time, a great philanthropist, a great intellectual. He was also a champion of Turkey's ties with Europe and the United States and a great champion also of education which is I think why this particular effort takes the shape as it does as a collaboration between Brookings and Sabancı University, and also I should add an international essay contest, a research award, that we began last year which seeks to highlight in particular one theme having to do with Turkey, its past, and its role in the world.

This year we are going to begin with that ceremony before we get to our lecture from our distinguished guest Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and I am going to be pleased in a second to ask Güler Sabancı up to the podium. But in the meantime, let me just first of all welcome our guests who are in Istanbul at the university with whom we are linked live. I would like to say hello to the president of the university. Is that Tosun Terzioğlu?

SPEAKER: A very good morning to our distinguished guests at the Brookings Institution from Sabancı University.

MR. BENJAMIN: It is a pleasure to have you here. Let me say before I turn over the podium, I want to thank my colleagues here at Brookings who have made our Turkey Program so very strong. First, Omer Taspınar who

has been the Director of the program for several years, and I am particularly delighted to thank my colleague Ambassador Mark Parris who is the United States Ambassador to Ankara and who is here conducting what we have called Turkey 2007, a special 1-year program. I think when Mark came aboard with the idea that this would be a pivotal year for Turkey, he had it exactly right and probably more right than he ever anticipated. We are delighted that he is here and he will be taking part in the question and answer later on.

Without further ado, let me just ask you first of all to turn off your cell phones. There is a lot of technology in the room, and I am always afraid that too much will cause us a problem. With that I would like to invite Güler Sabancı to the podium.

MS. SABANCI: Good morning, Washington, and I think it is good afternoon in Istanbul. It is indeed a great pleasure to be back here in Brookings. This is our third Sakıp Sabancı lecture and the second Sakıp Sabancı Research Award.

Before going into mentioning the jury of this special award, I would like to thank first of all both, both Sabancı University and the Brookings Institution in this partnership. There are a lot of people who put a lot of contributions to this happening, but I would like to really acknowledge Strobe Talbott, Carlos Pascual, Daniel Benjamin, Ambassador Mark Parris, Phil Gordon, and Omer Taspınar from the Brookings Institution. And of course from Sabancı

University Vice Chairman Professor Ahmet Aykac, our President Tosun Terzioglu, our General Secretary Haluk Bal, our communications team from the university, and my communication assistant Suat who made this today possible for us. I would like to thank them again, and this is becoming a tradition I like. Both institutions are putting so much effort, and I am so pleased today to see that this is also taking so much attention of your time also.

Of course today we will be listening to Ambassador Holbrooke which we are honored that he had accepted to give the third Sakıp Sabancı Lecture today.

I would like to say a few words about this year's award. As you most of you know, this year's award's topic is "Perceptions of the Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans and the Middle East." As we all know, the applicants were urged to submit original research findings which examine and analyze perceptions regarding the historical, cultural, economic, and political legacy of Ottoman rule in the Balkans and the Middle East.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire was particularly painful. The nations that emerged out of the ashes of the empire including Turkey have shunned the social and cultural legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Yet in the near past we have observed the atrocities that took place in Bosnia, we continue to witness the terrible situation in Palestine and in Iraq. These experiences allowed us to better appreciate the inclusive characteristics of Ottoman society. I hope

that understanding our past through fresh research will not only contribute to the fulfillment of this award's objectives, but also enlighten the way to create a better future.

This year we received entries from many places over the world including Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Greece, Moldavia, Norway, Israel, Serbia, Turkey, and the USA. The jury selected three research essays out of 42 outstanding entries.

Before going into the presentation of the awards, I would like to mention the members of the jury. I will be reading them all, and I would like you to applaud afterward. Ustun Erguder, Director of the Istanbul Policy Center, Sabanci University. Corner Fleischer, Professor of Ottoman and modern Turkish studies, University of Chicago. Cemal Kafadar, Professor of Turkish Studies, Harvard University. Metin Kunt , Professor of History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabanci University. Maria Todorova , Professor of History, University of Illinois. Elizabeth Zachariadou, Program Director, Institute for Mediterranean Studies in Crete. Sami Zubeda, Professor of Politics and Sociology, School of Politics and Sociology, University of London. Walter Denny , Professor of Art History, University of Massachusetts. Israel Gershoni , Professor of History from Tel Aviv University. I would like to thank all members of the jury for this great work that they have done.

On behalf of Sabanci University and the Brookings Institution,
thank you very much. Most of them are here with us. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SABANCI: Now I would like to thank also all the applicants,
42 applications as I mentioned. I am sure it was not easy to select. But I would
like to first mention the first Honorable Mention goes to Edin Hajdarpasic.
Hajdarpasic is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at Michigan
University and Fellow at the Michigan Institute for the Humanities. His essay is
entitled "Out of the Ruins of the Ottoman Empire: Reflections on the Ottoman
Legacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina." Hajdarpasic is here with us today. I would
like to congratulate him.

The second Honorable Mention goes to Dr. Charles Sabatos . He
is a postdoctoral fellow at Oberlin College. His work is entitled (inaudible) than a
Turk: Slovak Perceptions of the Ottoman Legacy in Eastern Europe." Dr. Sabatos
is unfortunately not here with us today. I would like to congratulate both of the
Honorable Mentions.

Now I would like to go and introduce you to the third place
winners. In order to present the prizes, I will be calling on Professor Ahmet
Aykac, Ambassador Holbrooke, and I will present the first award.

The Third Prize Winner is Maximillian Hartmuth with his work
entitled "De-constructing a Legacy in Stone: Of interpretative and

historiographical problems concerning the Ottoman cultural heritage in the Balkans." Hartmuth is a Ph.D. candidate of Sabanci University's History Graduate Program. Please welcome Mr. Maximillian Hartmuth and Professor Ahmet Aykac.

(Applause.)

MS. SABANCI: The Second Prize is being shared, and goes to Dr. Suhnaz Yilmaz, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations Koc University and Dr. Ipek Yosmaoglu, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Their joint work is entitled "Fighting the Specters of the Past: Dilemmas of the Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans and the Middle East." Please welcome Dr. Yilmaz and Dr. Yosmaoglu, and Ambassador Holbrooke.

(Applause.)

MS. SABANCI: This year's Sakip Sabanci Research number-one winner, is Dr. Christine Philliou, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Columbia University, with her essay entitled "The Paradox of Perceptions: Interpreting the Ottoman Past to the National Present." Please welcome Dr. Philliou.

(Applause.)

DR. PHILLIOU: I have to make a confession that I never imagined my study of Ottoman history would bring me fame and fortune, but I am happy to be proven wrong in this instance. This is really such a tremendous

honor. I am truly thrilled to be here receiving the Sakip Sabanci International Research Award. I want to thank Güler Sabanci, Tosun Terziogllu, and Ahmet Aykac of Sabanci University, as well as those at the Brookings Institution for making this award possible. And of course the members of the jury for their time and consideration.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my colleagues at the History Department at Columbia University not merely for providing me with a venue to develop my ideas and research, but with an environment and an intellectual community that fosters new ways of thinking beyond the confines of the 20th century nation-state.

I would also like to give special thanks to the people who decided on the theme of Perceptions of the Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans and Middle East for this year's competition. When I first saw the announcement for the competition last fall, I was a little befuddled. I thought why not simply the Ottoman Legacy in the Middle East and Balkans. Then as I mulled over the topic and thought about my experiences living and conducting research in several former Ottoman territories, I began to realize it was precisely this issue that first drew me into the Ottoman Empire, not the legacy per se, but the paradoxical perception of that legacy through the empire's former land. It was this nagging disconnect that I write about in my essay between the official history I had studied in high school and college that tried to stay faithfully within the bonds of national

history and as such barely mentioned the Ottoman Empire, and the stories and the comments and behavior of family and friends who had been born in the Ottoman Empire or lived in modern day Greece and Turkey.

This disconnect hit me head on in 1994 when I had been living in Thessalonica , Greece which always seemed different from Athens in a way I could never put my finger on. Then one day I got on a bus to Istanbul and as I watched Thrace go by, first Western Thrace on the Greek side of the border, then Eastern Thrace on the Turkish side, I started to realize that little changed from one side to the other of the border. The landscape, the architecture, the people looked the same, although they were speaking a different language. The food was more or less the same. Even the body language and behavior was strikingly similar.

Then we arrived in Istanbul and I immediately realized why Thessalonica seemed so different from Athens, because for centuries it was aspiring to be like Istanbul, not Athens, and had done quite a good job of it. It was from that moment that I started to put the many pieces together to contextualize all of these strange hunches, disconnects, coincidences of language, custom, and values, across supposedly separate national entities.

Even more fascinating for me is the fact that this journey of discovery of the Ottoman past coincided with the awakening in Greece and Turkey of aspects of their common history. In 1994 the two countries were on the verge of war and little information or understanding crossed the boundaries

between the two. Today the situation could not be more different with tour groups crossing back and forth daily, and one's downright romanticization of the other has taken the place of hostile ignorance.

So today I asked to comment on the governing ideas behind my research. The epiphany I have just described forms those governing ideas, and no pun intended, my research has to do with Ottoman governance in the first half of the 19th century. So how did I get from the bus depot at Baram Pashan in Istanbul to Ottoman governance?

I began to realize that there are two ways to approach history. The first and most common way is to start from the present, from the horrible conflicts that seem to grow worse each day in many former Ottoman territories, and look back for the roots of those conflicts. While this approach might seem to give us insight on the present, it also works to make the present conflict seem tragically inevitable by tracing the one path that led here. But as we know from our lifetimes, the present can and does change. Sometimes at the level of global constellations of power and the way categories of confessional, ethnic, or other kinds of belonging get politicized and brought into that global constellation of power.

With this approach to history, we also tend to look at ourselves as outside the story that led to the present and at a history fundamentally different from us. This can and often does imply the feeling that if we could just get

involved we could solve the problem and eliminate what seems to be the Ottoman legacy of bloodshed and strife.

The other way to approach history is to start from the past, but to keep our knowledge of the present in mind, to take the path on its own terms and if we are lucky enough to find rich source material, try to put together how the past must have looked to those who could not predict their future. This of course requires two things of the historian, imagination to be able to undo our current mental framework for the world and piece together another framework, and empathy to be able to gauge how a fellow human being might have felt in that other context.

The task of translation between this other world and our own is central to writing the history that comes out of this approach. So it is also not a coincidence that I ended up researching the translators or the divans themselves and their role in Ottoman governance in my quest to put the pieces of Ottoman history together. They like the historian had to mediate between several worlds in their own time translating language but also the protocol, mindset, and interests of one or another state or even one or another subject group in the Ottoman Empire. To take their perspective on the devolution of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the world of nation-states allows us to see the roads that were not taken and to gain insight on the choices and relationships that led down the road to our time.

I would argue that when we use this second approach to history rooted in the past and taking the path on its own terms and using our imagination empathy, we gain insight not only on Ottoman governance as a system different but analogous to our own, but we come out with a history that transforms the way we look at conflicts in the present. So in a broader sense what governs my research is the seemingly simplistic or naïve belief that those unlike us whether removed from us by centuries or by geography or ideology in our town time were and are all human beings deserving of empathy and acting out of the same feelings that we feel.

This means that I approached the Ottoman Empire as a realm where people, and keep in mind roughly 30 generations of people, lived and died, not as the starting point for vicious hatreds that it may look like if we use the first approach to history I mentioned.

I would like to leave you with the message that history matters not in the way it is often thought to in today's world as evidence in a case to prove the eternal nature of hatreds between peoples in the Middle East and Balkans, rather, history matters to the Middle East and Balkans because it allows us to appreciate the shocking novelty of supposedly immutable categories and eternal hatreds. The paradoxical perception of the Ottoman legacy also matters in part because it explains the way many people in the former Ottoman Empire behave when they are not consciously trying to be national. It is at those moments when they forget

what they are supposed to be doing, inadvertently they call on their Ottoman legacy, not just at those moments of strife or bloodshed.

Once again thank you for this recognition that history matters and that Ottoman history may be the missing link we need to understand the world we inhabit today, and I truly hope this could be the beginning of a new kind of dialogue about the relevance of Ottoman history in our world. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. BENJAMIN: Thank you very much Christine for those terrific remarks. Sitting there at the end of the podium I was reminded that when we are Brookings are doing our job well, and I think this is true of anyone in the policy community here, we are also trying to be historians of the present and trying to understand things on their own terms as a prologue to coming up with ideas for what we should be doing. So despite the fact that you are dealing with the 19th century and before, I think there is a wonderful confluence here in terms of what we are doing, and I think there is also a congruence insofar as we are also trying to remember a more cosmopolitan and better functioning time in our own work.

I would like to open the floor now just for a few questions for our winner. Is there anyone who would like to cross-examine her or take their measure of the Ottoman period? There are surely people here who still have

questions about Ottoman matters and how they affect today because after all we do see that legacy everywhere from the Western Balkans to the Middle East.

There is a question right here. Can you introduce yourself, please?

QUESTION: (inaudible)

MR. BENJAMIN: Just think of it as the last hurdle for the prize.

DR. PHILLIOU: I was thinking about this last night when there was a discussion going on about what's going on now in Turkey and I kept thinking what is the connection. I guess the connection would be that in many ways what happened in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic is still very tangled. I don't know if I am qualified to comment on this aspect, but it seems to me as an Ottoman story that what that path represents in Turkey has not really been resolved within the Turkish national imaginary. So what is perhaps going on about conflicting visions of what Turkey needs to be now has a lot to do with that unresolved bundle of issues about the Ottoman past. That is the best I can do right now.

MR. BENJAMIN: You have a future in government. Any further questions? I guess you said it all. Congratulations. We are delighted you could be here today, and don't spend it all in one place.

(Applause.)

MR. BENJAMIN: Now I get to introduce the introducer. It is my pleasure to welcome Ambassador Carlos Pascual to the podium. Strobe Talbott

who is the President of Brookings was eager to be here today but he is under the weather and under doctor's orders not to be at this event which he has presided over the last 2 years and which I know is very close to his heart. He does send his very best regards, but I am afraid he could not be here. With that I will turn it over to the Vice President for Foreign Policy Studies Ambassador Carlos Pascual.

(Applause.)

MR. PASCUAL: Dan, thank you very much. I am no substitute for Strobe Talbott, but I hope one of the things that I can do is convey the importance and the conviction and, Ms. Sabanci, the passion that we feel about this event and the lecture series that you have made possible. Indeed, as Dan said, Strobe would be here if at all possible because he believes in Turkey as a force for positive in change in Europe and stability in Europe and he would have loved to have been here to have the opportunity to join in this ceremony.

The Sakip Sabanci Lecture Series in honor of the late Sakip Sabanci not only pays homage to the legacy of an exceptional man with great vision and wisdom, it provides a forum that recognizes the importance of Turkey. Ms. Sabanci, we very much are honored to be able to host this lecture series in this spirit.

At Brookings we have tried to use this forum in order to raise the level of the discussion about Turkey, a nation that is charting a unique democratic path amidst a complicated region, Iraq and the Middle East, the Balkans, the

Caucuses, Russia, Europe, each of those in its own way ironically each represents a certain source of tension, and ironically, Turkey presents the potential for stability among all of them.

It was really in that spirit that we felt that Turkey is the best answer to the fallacy of the clash of civilizations. Our goals, those goals of the United States and Turkey, are shared and we think that every nation has a stake in seeing the success of Turkey's demonstration that political freedom, a market economy, secularism, and Islam, can coexist in a thriving European state that also straddles Asia.

This is why for this lecture we sought to find someone who can speak with an authoritative American voice but also had a truly global perspective on Turkey, on its global significance, and on its relevance to an evolving Europe. To be sure, Europe will shape Europe's future, but if there is an American who has contributed to that architecture, it has been Richard Holbrooke. Whether that has been in helping the shape the vision for NATO's enlargement, for the role that he has played in helping to bring peace in the Balkans, for the encouragement that he has given to the continued enlargement of the European Union, and in his role in the United Nations as an advocate for peace and stability and for the importance of Turkey as a country which can be a force for peace and stability not only in Europe but in the international community. On a personal note, what I would also add is that Richard Holbrooke has been a person of great vision of

understanding challenges that will emerge in the future in which begin to find ourselves today.

I just wanted to note one of his other ventures in life which is President of the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria. I raise this because this past year more people have died of HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria, than certainly of any weapon of mass destruction in the history of humankind. One of the things that Dick has done is to recognize that these pandemics are their own weapon of mass destruction and with the Global Business Coalition has built a network of 220 companies across the United States, Europe, and Asia that is tackling these issues. I am pleased to note as well John Tedstrom, the Executive Director of the Global Coalition who is with him today.

But back to the immediate task of Turkey and Dick Holbrooke and foresight. Twelve year ago in 1995 when he was the Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke had the wisdom and vision to declare that Turkey was a "frontline state that stands at the crossroads of almost every issue of importance to the United States and on the Eurasian Continent." Richard Holbrooke was exactly right then. In the years since then he has been a careful and insightful analyst of the many issues that converge in Turkey and its neighborhood, and it is my pleasure to welcome Ambassador Holbrooke to Brookings to deliver the 2007 Sabanci Lecture.

(Applause.)

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MR. HOLBROOKE: Thank you, Carlos, and thank you for inviting me here today to give this speech. Ms. Sabanci, Ambassador Parris, Ambassador Pascual, Secretary Resor , my old friend, friends in Istanbul, and many friends here at Brookings in Washington, I am delighted to be here but very upset Strobe Talbott is not here because I was going to spend about half of my speech attacking him, criticizing him and pointing out that when he asked me to give this lecture 6 months ago I said everything I say about Turkey gets misreported and distorted by certain journalists, and he said, don't worry, in May 2007 things will be very calm in Turkey. They will just have picked a new President. Iraq will be relaxed and everything will be going well there. There will be no issues with Armenia. It will be a really easy speech. Thanks, Strobe.

I talked to Strobe this morning of course and he shares everything Carlos said about the importance of this lecture and about your vision, and it is an enormous honor to be here today to give this lecture.

The name Sabanci is virtually synonymous with Turkey's industrial and economic achievement. The Sabanci story from its humble beginnings in Central Anatolia under its visionary founder Sakip Sabanci, to its standing today as one of the world's most powerful family-owned companies is an awesome, extraordinary, and inspiring story. Americans, so proud of our own rags-to-riches stories, so certain that things like this happen as we like to say only in America, should take note of the Sabanci story which is not just about a

gigantic business group, but also about a huge philanthropic enterprise which has created a great university in Istanbul, Sabanci University, and more than 100 health, educational, and cultural centers cross Turkey. I am truly delighted that I am speaking directly to the students, faculty, and friends at Sabanci University at this great institution today, and I look forward to your questions.

Sabanci's Chairman, Güler Sabanci, is a visionary business leader. She is rightly named as one of the most powerful women in Europe. I find this a very odd phrase and one that should be banished from the language. She is simply one of the most powerful and influential people of either gender in Europe and in the world, and I thank you very, very much.

Among many of the cultural projects, one is this great lecture and now I have been brought here at your invitation and Strobe's, and to both of you I offer my thanks and my gratitude. I hope I will be up to the challenge.

So here we are at another decisive moment in Turkish history. As Professor Philliou just said, history does matter. It really does. And this country, Turkey, has faced many such moments in the last 85 years. While the historical record is mixed, the general trend has been unmistakable since Atatürk's extraordinary odyssey that set Turkey on its current path. Almost no one in the last century anywhere in the world fused political skills and vision so brilliantly and left such a lasting impact as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

In creating the modern nation-state of Turkey he laid the foundations for a vibrant secular democracy and he succeeded. In the words of the lead article in this week's *Economist*, "Turkey is a remarkable place. As a mainly Muslim country that practices full secular democracy, it is a working repudiation of the widespread belief that Islam and democracy are incompatible. Still --" the *Economist* went on to say, "-- over the years, Turkish democracy has shown itself to be vibrant yet at the same time fragile."

Since I speak today at what must be called a fragile moment in the history of Turkey, it is important that I not interfere in your internal political issues. I will therefore refrain from any comments specifically on the elections how scheduled for July 22, anything that might be viewed as constituting a position or a preference. But I do believe deeply in the future and the destiny of Turkey as a vital integral part of the Western world, its alliances and institutions including most definitely eventually membership in the European Union. But it is entirely up to the people of Turkey acting democratically to decide how to proceed both internally and with respect to the dangerous neighborhood in which Turkey lives. As an American, I feel especially constrained offering advice about elections since we held a national election 6 years ago in this country which was decided by a single vote in the American Supreme Court.

If once reduces Atatürk's vision of the Turkey he sought to build to a simple animating idea, it was that the new republic should be Western.

Everything else flowed from that. Being Western today obviously means something different from what it did in the dark days after World War I when Atatürk was founding the republic. Later as he sat in motion the process of democratization in Turkey, Atatürk with typical brilliance and foresight anticipated the direction which the West and Turkey should evolve, toward each other. Through its membership in NATO and as the reforms of the late President Turgut Özal made clear, Turkey became a more open society. Its Western identity put down firm roots. And with the European Union's confirmation in 2004 that Turkey's progress toward meeting the Copenhagen Criteria justified the start of negotiations on membership, those roots bore fruit. That fruit will ripen in due course but only if Turkey keeps its face turned firmly Westward.

As one who I think has amply demonstrated that I care deeply about Turkey and its relationship to the West, it seems to me that this is really what is at stake in the political crisis that overtook Turkey in the last few weeks. As I already said, I do not think it would be wise or useful for me to go into a lot of detail here, but I would say two more things. First, I continue to have confidence that Turkish democracy is up to the task of getting through this crisis. While all parties may have to one degree or another overplayed their hand during the past month or so, there is now a path forward. Elections have been scheduled for July 22. The Turkish people will have a chance to express clearly who they want to form the next government and who they want to lead the process of

picking Turkey's next President. There is absolutely no reason to expect the general election campaign and the subsequent negotiations on the presidency to be anything but grueling and partisan. In other words, it will look like the politics of other Western democracies including our own.

Secondly, as this process grinds forward, it will be important that it do so in a way that demonstrates conclusively that Turkey is a country in which the rule of law is paramount. Or to put it another way, that Turkey is truly a Western country. I think there is no concept that goes more deeply to the core of what it means to be Western than respect for the rule of law. Like it or not, that is the yardstick by which the rest of the world will judge the process by which the Turks pick their next government and the person who will next occupy Atatürk's old chair. Like it or not, this will be the best test of the extent to which those in Turkey who participate in or seek to effect this process can claim to be Atatürk's legitimate heirs. For my country, the United States, to go through such an electoral test was a huge trauma in 2000. For Turkey in 2007 given the country's history, geography, and events in the surrounding neighborhood, it will prove to be I am sure at least as dramatic.

On every side Turkey faces challenges of enormous proportions. What a neighborhood to live in. To the east, Armenia with the burden history still places upon that ancient relationship. To the southwest, Cyprus, still divided and troubled, the north isolated by an E.U. demand linked to Turkey's quest for

European Union membership. To the south and southeast, neighbors called Iran and Iraq, one a dangerous destabilizing religious dictatorship, the other a civil war raging out of control. I shall return to the war in Iraq in a moment. And last but not least, a European Union some of whose leaders and many of whose citizens fail to see the strategic and historic necessity for negotiating Turkey's accession into the European Union.

It is not surprising of course that many people living in European nations with significant Muslim minorities would be fearful of allowing the consequences of allowing a predominant Muslim nation which would immediately become the European Union's largest member to join its club. These concerns have understandably increased as the result of terrorist attacks in such places as London and Madrid, although of course, and I stress this, no Turks were involved. So those of us in the United States who follow or try to follow events in Turkey, and this is not always easy because American press coverage of Turkey is extremely uneven and to my mind inadequate, those of us who have tried to follow events in Turkey and those of us who have long argued with the leaders of the European Union that they should open the door to Turkey, we well understand why the number of Turks who favor seeking E.U. membership has dropped in the last few years according to public opinion polls especially because the European Union seems to keep changing the rules. After all, who would try to crash the gates of a club that might want you as a member? This is, however, an

unfortunate trend and I hope that both the E.U. and Turkey resume a more-intensive effort to negotiate Turkey's membership. We all know that the road will be rocky, even more so after Sunday's election results in France, but Europe and Turkey need each other now more than ever for obvious reasons that outweigh lesser however legitimate considerations.

To the south of Turkey all is in turmoil. A Turkey anchored inside the E.U. is better for the United States and Europe as well as Turkey itself, much better than a nation drifting between two worlds with no strong security connection beyond its NATO membership. That NATO membership of course is vitally important to the United States and to every member of the E.U. including E.U. members that are not members of NATO, for example, Sweden, Iceland, Malta, Cyprus.

Why then deny Turkey the chance to meet the E.U. criteria? There are as we all know some special economic considerations involved, but over the long negotiation that is necessary, this can be hammered out. So Turks are undoubtedly asking especially now if and when Europe will regain its interest in bringing Turkey into the union. These questions are hard to answer just a few days after the victory of Nicolas Sarkozy in France and as Tony Blair heads for the door in Great Britain. The fact is that the generation of leaders who viewed E.U. membership for Turkey as more an opportunity than a problem are departing

the scene. Their successors have come to political maturity in a very different strategic and domestic political environment.

It will take time for the Europeans to figure out precisely what they want the E.U. to become. It will take time for them to come to terms with the growing and largely negative awareness of their own Muslim populations. That is one of the great challenges Europe will face and it will take time for the new generation of European leaders to acquire the geostrategic wisdom and sense of statecraft that ultimately led their predecessors with prodding from the United States under President Clinton to open the door to Turkish membership in the E.U.

Meanwhile, one senior European official, in fact, the one in charge of European Union enlargement Olli Rehn did do his best in the last few days to try to calm things down. He said, "We should ensure that we stick to our commitment and react fairly and firmly with Turkey by maintaining the accession process and moving forward." I am still convinced this will happen and when it comes it will be critical that European find in Turkey as did Turkey's interlocutors in 1999, 2004, and 2005, a country as committed to and comfortable with its Western identity as was its founder.

This tour of Turkey and its issues brief as it is must conclude with a discussion of the region to Turkey's immediate south that is consuming the United States. I speak of course of Iraq. Iraq already presents us with the worse

situation internationally in modern American history, worse even than Vietnam where I spent 3-1/2 years of my career as a Foreign Service officer and 7 years of my career working on it in Saigon and the Mekong Delta, Paris, and Washington. I never thought I would say anything was worse than Vietnam, but Iraq, my friends, is worse than Vietnam.

We all hope here in the United States, Democrats and Republicans, people who oppose the war and people who supported it, we all hope as to most Turks with whom I have talked that the current American offensive under the leadership of General David Petraeus will succeed, but we must recognize that chances for success as defined by the administration are not high.

If it does not succeed, then the United States will face an even more difficult set of essentially four choices. One, send more troops; two, try to hold on with the current force levels; three, look for a way to disengage from the battle of Baghdad while fighting al-Qaeda in other parts of the country; or four, just get out. You can assume safely that the current administration will reject the last option, just getting out, and look for ways to salvage something from the wreckage of its own misguided policies. But if this is the case, and I think it is likely, it is certain that President Bush will pass the war in Iraq on to his successor, and I might add, also pass the war in Afghanistan on to his successor, and of course also pass a major confrontation with Iran on to his successor.

We must assume therefore both in Washington, Ankara, and Istanbul that the next president will inherit the most difficult foreign policy challenges ever to land in the Oval Office on day one, even more difficult than those that faced Harry Truman on April 12, 1945. Of course, none of us know who will become our 44th President, but whoever it is, the odds are very high that disengagement from Iraq unless the war is clearly being won will be a very high priority. Any withdrawal in my view should not be done precipitously of course, but no one can predict now what the next president will actually confront 21 months from now.

What concerns me and this audience at the Sabanci Lecture today should be the implications of this situation for Turkey. Everyone here knows that Iraq's north region contains millions of Kurds and that this area includes a terrorist organization known as the PKK that conducts cross-border raids. In 1995 when I was Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Turkish troops in large numbers entered the mountains of northern Iraq to eliminate the PKK. Under intense pressure from Congress to oppose the Turkish action, President Clinton and the State Department resisted the congressional pressure and after intense discussions with the Turkish government accepted the government's pledge that the operation would be limited in scope and duration and held back the pressure from Congress. The operation was limited in scope and duration and there was no

lasting effect on U.S.-Turkish relations which were then 12 years ago in much better shape than they are today.

But those were different times. Saddam was in power and the forces of the Kurdish leader Masood Bersani were cooperating with the Turkish Army in that offensive. Today things are far more complicated. An excellent American Special Envoy General Joe Ralston is seeking to deal with the PKK problem without recourse to military action in those remote and high mountains along the Turkish-Iraqi border.

The additional problem of the status of Kirkuk vastly complicates the situation. When I visited Irbil in northern Iraq 2 months ago, I was struck by several things, Kurdish determination to move Kirkuk into the region known as Iraqi Kurdistan, the widespread presence of over 300 Turkish companies in northern Iraq doing most of the business, most of the construction, and getting along extremely well with the Kurds in northern Iraq, and the absolutely clear sense and those region had more in common with Turkey than it had with the rest of war-torn Iraq. No Iraqi flags, only the Kurdish flag, a different currency, tight internal border controls, tight at the time, but yesterday of course somebody breached them and did manage to get a suicide bomber inside Irbil, the first time, and a peaceful security situation until that event yesterday.

When I wrote about this trip to northern Iraq and about my talks with the leaders in Turkey in "The Washington Post" in February, some Turkish

journalists and politicians misunderstood or misrepresented my views, so let me make them clear one more time. I am not advocating independence for Iraqi Kurdistan, although we must recognize that well over 90 percent of the people there want it. Turkey's long-term strategic interests lie in finding ways to work with the Kurdish leadership in northern Iraq in order to ensure that if Iraq disintegrates, the chaos does not spread into the north, an event that would cause enormous additional problems for Turkey and dwarf the PKK problem.

For their part, the Iraqi Kurds must agree to joint efforts to stop the PKK from using Iraqi terrorist as a base from which to attack inside Turkey. They must not stir up tensions inside Turkey between Turks and Kurds. And they must show a readiness to work for regional stability with the government of Turkey. As for the United States, in my view the U.S. should be prepared to support such arrangements in whatever means is mutually agreed to if both sides wish it.

I well know how controversial and emotional this issue is in Turkey, but friends should speak freely to each other, and we are friends. The deterioration in U.S.-Turkish relations since 2003 is deeply distressing to all of us, all of you, who have worked so hard to strengthen that friendship. We still have common interests, we still have common threats. The lecture series like the one that Sabanci is sponsoring is an example of the ties that should be deepened and strengthened in the face of the growing gulf between the two nations. To me,

Turkey remains the indispensable front-line state for the Western alliance for the Western world in the fight against extremism. We in the United States and in the European Union must never forget that. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. PARRIS: I am Mark Parris and I will be moderating the question-and-answer period. I want to first congratulate you, Dick, on the tour de force that we all came here to hear. It was comprehensive, it was insightful, and I am sure it has generated a lot of questions.

The way this will work is that we will take a question here, we will go to Istanbul where I believe Sabri Sayiri is standing by to moderate at that end. Sabri, are you there?

MR. SAYIRI: Yes, I'm here.

MR. PARRIS: And we will alternate back and forth with modifications.

I think in the interests of inclusiveness I am going to pass up the usual prerequisite of the Chair to ask the first question. Is there a question?

QUESTION: Asli Aydinatasbas from Sabah.

MR. HOLBROOKE: Not the journalist I was criticizing earlier.

QUESTION: But you have talked about Turkey eventually making it into the E.U., but you have also very accurately laid out the landscape whereby pro-Turkey politicians (inaudible) and let's add to that the fact that there

is waning support for Turkey's membership both in Europe and in Turkey. My question is, should we in Turkey as a practical matter continue our reluctance to talk about things like the privileged partnerships and why not?

MR. HOLBROOKE: Again I am not going to answer your question, Asli , even though this is a very, very good journalist. I know Asli very well for Washington and Ankara, and the question is typically too smart. I am not going to tell Turkey how to deal with Brussels. My view, and I have held this for over a decade, Mark Parris and I have worked very closely in this together and I think in my view President Clinton was the leading advocate on both sides of the Atlantic for Turkey's European destiny, but the details of how you approach it have to be dealt with in dealing with the new realities, and we all know what those new realities are. They start with the election in France, a transition in Britain which was announced today, and the growing sentiment which you describe.

I do not actually know what a privileged partnership means. We worked very hard to help you get the Customs Union in the mid-1990s. I worked on that along with Stu Eisenstat when he was Ambassador to the European Union. We admire enormously the way Turkey has moved forward to adjust its policies to be closer to the rest of the Europe. I really feel that the European Union keeps changing the goal posts and that is why I understand why more and more Turks say we should not pursue this any more. Why keep getting rejected? But I urge

my friends in Turkey and I urge my friends in Brussels, if I have any, to keep this thing moving forward for historical reasons. But we all understand why.

I was in Munich last week and I got into a tremendous fight with some of the Germans I most respect over this issue and over the parallel issue of the fact that Turks for the most part, Turks living in Germany, even third-generation Turks who were born in Germany of Turkish parents who were born in Germany, do not really yet have full equal status, and all Americans because of our own racial problems know what the long-term consequences of that are. These two issues are closely related and it is going to take real leadership. But privileged partnership, what you do with that, that is a tactical decision.

MR. PARRIS: Thank you, Dick. I think we are now going to Istanbul. If I could ask the questioners both here and in Istanbul yourselves before you pose your questions. Sabri, over to you.

MR. SAYIRI: Thank you, and thanks to Dr. Holbrooke for the lecture. We listened to it carefully and we have a number of people who are very eager to ask you some questions. I think the first question is from -- could you please identify yourself?

QUESTION: (inaudible) at Sabanci University (inaudible) thank you very much for your interesting questions, and I have two questions for you. If I can ask you about the issue of diversification in the Turkish-American relationship. The relationship is highly fragile because we all know that

(inaudible) security issues. Could you please comment on what cause you see for diversifying the relationship in trade, investment, or cultural issues (inaudible) for the relationship here.

And second of all, and I am very afraid that my second question will be also security oriented, there is this new approach called (inaudible) in which not only Armenia and Iraq, but also Russia plays a very important role. How would you comment on the feature of the Turkish-Russian relationship in the light of the Turkish crisis? Thank you.

MR. HOLBROOKE: Thank you. Two very good questions. On the first one, I agree with you that the relationship was historically based on security issues, but as a person who has worked on and off on Wall Street for some years, I have noticed a continually growing American interest in Turkey from a business point of view. The Turkish economy has boomed in the last few years under the current government. I think Madam Sabanci's presence here is very indicative. She is not just here at Brookings. She is having very important meetings with leading American financial and industrialists and those kinds of links are growing.

But we all agree on the cultural side this is a very interesting issue, Americans are insufficiently aware of the great and historic Turkish culture except of course for Istanbul as an extraordinary city, one of the greatest cities to visit in the world. But, and I think this goes very much back to your thesis and

what you wrote about, you yourself were not sure about that transition period between the Ottomans and Atatürk. If you are not sure about it and you are one of the handful of Americans who has actually studied it, what about the rest of us? How did the Ottoman Empire, the sick man of Europe, and it is always important to remember that it was not the sick man of Asia, it was the sick man of Europe, become modern Turkey? We know it was done because of this outsized historical figure, but what did it mean and how did it happen?

So we Americans know very little about Turkey from a cultural point of view beyond the era of the Ottoman, the sultans, don't you think, and we have to learn more about it. Once again, that is why your vision in doing this, Madam Sabanci, is so important.

On your second question about Russia, Mark Parris told me someone would be asking about Russia, and you did it right away. A lot of us myself included have a larger concern about the current direction of Russia. Putin is currently in a very active effort to destabilize an important Turkish neighbor, Georgia. They would be happy if President Saakashvili disappeared, and their performance in Georgia is troubling to me. They have cut off rail traffic, car traffic, airplanes, mail. They are taking discriminatory actions against Georgians in Russia. They are also being extremely belligerent toward Estonia, and they are threatening to veto the Ahtisaari plan for Kosovo's glide path toward

independence in the United Nations, and that has gone into the Security Council this week. Plus they are making rather belligerent statements.

How does that affect Turkey? Turkey needs to have good relations with Russia. I am not predicting a return to the Cold War. But it is very important that Turkey particularly as it sits astride these very important energy pipelines, oil and gas pipelines, remembers where its long-term interests lie and that it is the Western orientation we talked about earlier. U.S.-Western relations with Russia are not where they should be now and they are going to need to be straightened out for mutual benefit, and I do not mean that in a hostile sense, I mean that in terms of sitting down with Moscow and clearing the air in a clearly deteriorating situation.

MR. PARRIS: Sabri, if you agree I think I will take two questions in sequence here and then turn it over to you to do two there and will continue in that mode. Let me take one from the back on the aisle there first.

MR. DILLON: Ken Dillon , Spectrum Bioscience. We have in Turkey stationed American troops at bases and installations that are a legacy from the Cold War. Do you think it would be advisable to close down those bases and withdraw those troops, and if not, why not?

MR. HOLBROOKE: I certainly do not think it would be advisable right now for the simplest of logistical reasons. Those bases are an indispensable part of the American military effort in Iraq and Afghanistan and to close them

down would be enormously detrimental to the safety and security of the American troops. In the long term what happens between American bases in Turkey is an issue for the Turkish government to talk about with the U.S. I do not personally favor the withdrawal of those bases. I think it is part of NATO. Turkey is an indispensable part of NATO as I have said repeatedly. In fact, to me it defines NATO. What is NATO without Turkey right now? And once again my comments about being a frontline state apply. So I would not see any value in raising this issue at this time.

MR. PARRIS: Second question?

MR. SHAPIRO: Jeremy Shapiro from Brookings. You said that you do not want to tell Turkey how to deal with Brussels, but you seem very willing to tell Brussels how to deal with Turkey. Certainly for the European Union the issue of Turkish accession is a very fraught domestic issue just as it is in Turkey. Why do you make this distinction between the two countries, if you will, and the domestic politics?

MR. HOLBROOKE: I am not sure that is exactly what I said. I have talked a lot to Turkey about its relations with Brussels when I was in government and I said I did not want to talk about the domestic political situation, and then I kind of ducked Asli's question about privileged partnership because it is very technical and as I said, I really do not know what it means but it sounds to

me like some people mean it as an alternative and some mean it as a part of a path toward, and therefore I do not know how to comment.

As for the European Union, if I give them more advice then I am giving Turkey, and I made my joke about if I have any friends in Brussels, I have lots of friends in Brussels, but they have their own way of doing things in Brussels and it is pretty frustrating at times as we all know. I just do not think that the European Union has treated Turkey over the years in terms of consistency. As I said earlier, they keep changing the goal posts, they keep changing the rules, and I do not think this is the right way to negotiate. And Turks legitimately ask are there criteria we can meet to get into the E.U. or are you always going to changing them in which case we ought to rethink our strategy. That is a fair question and right now in light of recent political events that I mentioned earlier, it is even more fair. But first let's let Turkey get through its own political drama and then resume the discussion.

I am not a tactician about this. I am talking about the goal and the goal in my view, which has never changed, President Clinton and I and others in the administration has always been unambiguous about this, Turkey is part of Europe, the E.U. should find a way to bring them in. It will take a while, it will be a difficult route.

The details are not for us to micromanage. And by the way, if there is anyone in the room who in any known language can explain the European

Union *Acquis* and how it works, let them write one of those fascinating Brookings books which nobody ever reads, because I sure do not understand it. Don't tell Strobe I said that.

(Applause.)

MR. PARRIS: Thank you for that vote of confidence in the institution, Dick, and we will now go to Istanbul for a couple of questions.

MR. HOLBROOKE: Strobe doesn't publish his book by Brookings does he?

MR. PARRIS: Sabri, are you there? Are we able to go to Istanbul for two questions? We seem not to have sound at this end. I apologize to the questioner. Until someone tells me that we have sound and can listen to the question so that Dick can answer it, I think we have no choice but to go ahead at this end with further questions. So I am going to do this so that you in Istanbul will know that we are not just being rude, but we can't hear. So Dick, I'm going to take a question.

MR. HOLBROOKE: Can you still hear us in Istanbul? Can you raise your hand if you can hear us? We could not hear that question, so will take one here and try to fix this and go back to the woman who asked the last question.

MR. PARRIS: There is a question there in the middle.

MR. WERTH: Steven Werth from Plexis Consulting Group . My question is couldn't Turkey be playing a great role in Iraq in resolving that issue, and if it could why isn't it?

MR. HOLBROOKE: I think I have made clear in the latter part of my speech the role I think Turkey could play which deals primarily with northern Iraq. And the Sunni-Shiite issue? No. And I do not think there would be a lot of enthusiasm in Iraq for Turkish troops. There is a certain history there. And when some of the more benighted members of this administration suggested that a few years ago, the reaction was pretty clear cut, it wouldn't be in Turkey's interests. But Turkey and the Kurdish portion of Iraq, the northern part of Iraq, have got a tremendous set of issues to work on and this is difficult to do because of the vast emotions that are running here and that is why I made the suggestion I made before, and every time I make it it is misunderstood in some elements in Turkey who deliberately say I am calling for Kurdish independence which I am not doing, but that issue would go a long way toward stabilizing a portion of Iraq. The Sunni-Shia problems, the battle of Baghdad, if you were in Ankara, would you recommend that Turkey get involved? I don't think so.

MR. PARRIS: No one has told me that we have sound from Istanbul.

MR. HOLBROOKE: Do you want to try again?

MR. PARRIS: I'm getting the sign from the technicians here, so we will take another question here and proceed on this basis.

MS. MULHOLLEN: I am Susan Mulhollen , Mainstream Research Assessment . It seems that during the First World War we had no problem identifying the Ottoman Empire as the sick man of Europe and not Asia. Where then does this ambivalence come from? Why are we more ambivalent now than we were then?

MR. HOLBROOKE: I am not sure when you say we who you mean. For the Europeans it's cultural, it's religious, and it deals with Turkish minorities which were not inside the countries that are now in the E.U. back at the beginning of the last century. And of course the sick man of Europe was a reference to an area which included very substantial parts of what is now Europe, Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania at times, and going back a few centuries, Budapest. That is a long-standing historical issue, so I think the differences are very clear cut.

But I think the major reason is the Muslim minorities in the European countries including the U.K. Those are not Turks, they are from South Asia, but Europe is undergoing a transformation on its ethnicity which Europeans do not want to acknowledge, and to me that is one of the great historic issues. I know that Dan Benjamin is writing on that for Brookings and it is a transcending historically important issue, and to some extent the issue we are talking about

here, Turkish member in the E.U., is profoundly affected by the unrecognized nature of how European leaderships do not want to recognize and acknowledge the dimensions of that issue.

We confronted our racial issues. It is the underlying problem of our society and we have not done all that well, but we have done better than most people and we have made vast progress in recent years and recent decades. The Europeans used to mock us for our racial problems. They do not do that so much, but they have not come to terms with their own. I believe, I do know Mark if you would agree, that the underlying reason is the spin-off of their own internal dilemmas. That is the issue you are working on isn't it, Dan? A very big issue.

MR. PARRIS: I am reliably informed that we are back online and therefore I am going to ask Sabri to take the next two questions. Sabri, are you able to hear us? If so, can you acknowledge?

MR. HOLBROOKE: Maybe it's that mike.

MR. PARRIS: I don't want to interrupt the questioner, but again we are not hearing the question. I apologize for the technical difficulties, but the sound is not coming through at this end. Our technicians here are scurrying about, but thus far without effect. So we will go back to our American audience, unfortunately. Well, not unfortunately, but we will take another question from the American audience.

QUESTION: (inaudible) television. Mister Secretary, do you think the planned Kirkuk referendum should be delayed? And on a more personal note, you were a supporter of Iraq's invasion at the time. What failed? Is it just the administration's mistakes or was Iraq's invasion a mistake from the very beginning. Looking in hindsight, any regrets?

MR. HOLBROOKE: Before I get to the second question, what was the first question? I didn't understand it.

QUESTION: The Kirkuk referendum, should it be delayed?

MR. HOLBROOKE: The Kirkuk referendum. On the Kirkuk referendum, this is a tough one, really tough because the passions are so high, but I would think given everything else that has gone on in Iraq, and normally I do not favor delays in these things because positions harden. I was very strongly opposed for example to the delay in dealing with the Kosovo situation in the last few years. But in the case of Kirkuk, I kind of lead toward delay, although I have heard the other side of the argument.

In terms of the invasion of Iraq and my own involvement in it, support of it, I need to be very precise. I testified before the Senate in favor of the resolution of September 2002 before the Foreign Relations Committee and that resolution was not a clear war resolution, it was as many Senators in explaining their votes had explained, a resolution which was presented to the Congress as a way of getting leverage for the United Nations to get the Resolution 1444 which

got the inspectors back into Iraq. The Secretary of State at the time explained very clearly that this was not an automatic leading to war. And in my testimony I put stress on what would happen if there was a military and what would happen after the American troops got to Baghdad and the importance of nation building and I suggested that the resolution be amended to limit its scope and have a specific section on reconstruction.

Several members of Congress went to the White House and tried to make those suggestions. The White House rejected the ones about reconstruction after Iraq and for that, that was an indication of what was to follow. What happened in Iraq after that -- there is a very interesting guy in Istanbul.

(Laughter.)

MR. HOLBROOKE: What happened in Iraq after that was the responsibility of the people who carried the war out, and I do not think that they have been held sufficiently to account yet. They are the ones who should be asked the famous question, If you knew then what you know now would you go ahead with the war? The answer is self-evident. How could anyone conceivably have proceeded with this strategy even though overthrowing Saddam was a legitimate goal and it was successfully achieved, how could anyone have gone ahead with the consequences which have done so much to damage America's situation in the region, have allowed the Taliban to regroup and gain strength again in Afghanistan, and have done so much to America in its current position? I

think the administration has not been held sufficiently to account for its role despite the enormous political debate that is swirling around this issue.

MR. PARRIS: Last night Strobe introduced the expression "The third time is a charm." We will try again with Istanbul. Sorry for the delay. Over to you, Sabri.

MR. HOLBROOKE: Can you hear us in Istanbul? Raise your hand if you hear us, please. We heard you briefly and then you disappeared again. There is a time delay. Go ahead.

QUESTION: This is Faruk Logoglu, Ambassador of Turkey to the United States from 2001 and 2005. First of all, hello to all the friends down in Washington, and also congratulations to the recipients of the Sakip Sabanci --

MR. HOLBROOKE: I'm afraid we lost you again right after you said Sabanci. Sorry about that. Mister Ambassador, I think we lost you again.

QUESTION: Can you hear me now?

MR. HOLBROOKE: Yes, you're back. You're back.

QUESTION: I will ask my question very rapidly. You quoted the article from the *Economist*. My question is about democracy and secularism in Turkey. In that you quoted from the *Economist* and such a stunning suggestion that if the Turkish people have to make a choice between democracy and secularism, the choice must be for democracy. Do you agree, Ambassador Holbrooke?

MR. HOLBROOKE: Mister Ambassador, may I ask you a question, which is why did you call that a stunning suggestion just so I understand the premise of your question before I respond.

QUESTION: Because I think the suggestion was that the Turks could or should give up secularism if they have to make a choice.

MR. HOLBROOKE: I cannot speak for the *Economist*.

QUESTION: (inaudible)

MR. HOLBROOKE: I cannot speak for the *Economist*, but --

QUESTION: What is your view on the proposition?

MR. HOLBROOKE: I think they go together. I do not think you should separate the two or can separate the two. I recognize that in some quarters each word is a code word for one side on a political debate, but even though you are a brilliant Ambassador, I am going to try to avoid the trap you have set for me here.

(Laughter.)

MR. HOLBROOKE: A secular democracy is what I understand your great founding leader had in mind, secular democracy is something to achieve, and the two words seem to me to go hand in hand.

MR. PARRIS: We will take a second question from Istanbul.

QUESTION: (inaudible) for the support we gave for a decade for the no-fly zone in northern Iraq, should we have made it more explicit that we

expected this to be recognized or is it not that important support that Turkey gave?

MR. HOLBROOKE: I think your support for the no-fly zone was absolutely indispensable. History will judge it as a generous and visionary act. I know full well how controversial it was in Turkey, and if it has not been sufficiently acknowledged in recent years, let me assure you that for myself and for President Clinton we sure appreciate it and we sure know how important it was.

I think the events surrounding the vote in April 2003. Was it March or April, Mark?

MR. PARRIS: March.

MR. HOLBROOKE: Excuse me, March 2003, on the 4th Infantry Division was a real disaster of misunderstandings and I believe that those American officials of the current administration who got angry at your country for what you did were misguided both specifically in regard to the tactics and details, and more importantly, the larger issues. Turkey is a democracy. You voted by your rules and fell just short in a process in which the United States did not present its case sufficiently clearly and the reaction had a retrospective coloration toward relations between the two countries. I see Ambassador Parris who is my guide in all things Turkish nodding vigorously, so I want to stress that.

But again, those people who follow this issue certainly appreciate what your country did. Without you, many, many people would have died or had been slaughtered or put in extreme risk, refugee flows would have been enormously greater than they were. Again I cannot speak for the current administration, but I will speak for those of us who were involved in that policy.

MR. PARRIS: We are coming to the close of this part of the program. I am going to take one more question here, and we will take one more in Istanbul.

QUESTION: (inaudible) University. How do you see U.S.-Iranian relations unfolding in the remaining months of the Bush Administration? What do you consider to be the implications for Turkish-American relations?

MR. HOLBROOKE: U.S.-Iranian relations are at the core of the dilemma the U.S. faces in these three countries that all neighbor on each other, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. Iran is a deeply destabilizing country which is fomenting Hamas, Hizballah, proceeding with a nuclear plan or goals which are even more dangerous in the long term, and exploiting the opportunity they have with high-priced oil. This administration's policy of refusing to talk to them about anything except the nuclear issue and then only if they agree in advance to the thing which should be the object of the negotiation strikes almost all outsiders as an odd policy to put it gently.

The Baker-Hamilton Commission recommended direct engagement, most members of the administration of President Bush Sr. recommended it, even Henry Kissinger broke with the administration on this issue, something he rarely does, and it is basic Diplomacy 101, you should do this kind of thing.

You talk to your adversaries, and talking does not imply weakness. I cannot stress that too highly because there is the subtext that if you talk to the bad guys, you are somehow weak. We talked to the bad guys in Bosnia. One of my negotiating colleagues is here in the room with me, Robert Owen, and we had some incredible talks with some of the worst war criminals in history, Radovan Karadzic, Slobodan Milosevic, and Radko Mladic. Why did we talk to them? We knew they were terrible people. We talked to them to solve a problem and we used force when we had to. So I do not agree with the current policy.

Will it change? I don't know. Secretary Rice went to this big Iraq conference last week and appeared to want to see the Iranians who then I think to her considerable embarrassment left the room before she arrived in it. But meeting on the margins of a big conference is not going to do anything but start the process. So I am not hopeful that things will move in this administration, but there needs to be something done about it.

But since you mentioned Iran I would like to bring up a Turkey-related issue on Iran which I left out of my speech because of the time, and that is

when I was in Ankara last and in Istanbul, many people talked about the discussions between Turkey and Iran concerning the PKK and other issues involving northern Iraq and some degree of private communications. I would hope that Turkey is rather careful about its relations with Iran. Iran is a theocratic dictatorship under the leadership of the most famous anti-Semite since Adolf Hitler and it is really not a good idea for the NATO alliance if this kind of thing goes on beyond the most limited exchanges of details on technical issues. If there is joint planning or discussion of joint planning going on as some people allege, I do not know the facts, I think that would be a serious problem and could undermine the integrity of NATO. But since the details of this are not clear and what I heard may not be entirely correct, I mention this not as a criticism of things that I do not know for a fact are going on, but more as a concern that they not happen and that I hope that the rumors that one hears are not true.

MR. PARRIS: To Istanbul for our last question.

QUESTION: (inaudible) Syria (inaudible) a comment here that we hear in Turkey is that when the U.S. eventually does pull out of the region, Turkey will still be here and its neighbors will also still be here. Do you think Turkey should actually put forth a hard-line policy or should Turkey continue to sustain a more diplomatic approach than we actually (inaudible)

MR. HOLBROOKE: We missed the first part of your question. Your microphone did not kick in until you got to Syria, so I am not sure I fully

understand your question. You want to know whether I think Turkey ought to play a harder-line position or a more diplomatic position? If that is the question, I do not think that is a choice. I think you have to defend your national security interests, and as we all agree and you just said it again, even if the U.S. leaves the region, Turkey will still be right where it is today geographically. So you have to define your strategic interests and protect them, and you do not have to choose between diplomacy and a strong position to defend your strategic interests. Correct national security policy whether it is Turkey or the United States involves both, and that is part of my criticism of what has happened in this administration here and I hope Turkey acts on that. That is why I made my earlier comments about Iran.

We heard you mention Syria but we did not hear what preceded that. Was that a Syrian part of this question?

QUESTION: (inaudible) diplomatic role in the region and has not taken a hard-line policy, so I believe that they have actually put a diverse policy forward (inaudible) the region, the neighbors will still be here.

MR. HOLBROOKE: I agree with that for the most part. I think Turkey has been a positive force in a difficult situation and some Americans have not understood how difficult that situation is. I have made clear my concerns and where I think your country ought to go after you have settled your own internal political direction, but I do not disagree with the premise of your question at all.

MR. PARRIS: I would like to thank the audiences on both sides of the Atlantic for their patience in dealing with the difficulties we have had. I would like to thank you, Dick, for a wonderful, wonderful lecture and wonderful answers.

I think that we are going to take some photos here in front, if I could ask people to remain in their seats until the principals have left.

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