

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION  
THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY:  
A VIEW FROM THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

**PARTICIPANTS:**

**Introduction:**

STROBE TALBOTT  
President  
The Brookings Institution

**Featured Speaker:**

PHILIP H. GORDON  
Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs  
U.S. State Department

**Moderator:**

FIONA HILL  
Senior Fellow and Director  
Center on the United States and Europe  
The Brookings Institution

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Ladies and gentlemen, friends, thank you for your patience. It's taken a couple of minutes to get started here. We're at that moment in the annual Sabanci Lecture, which we call the Insha'Allah moment, when we're making sure that all the technology is working.

I'm Strobe Talbott, and on behalf of all of us here at Brookings and particularly Ambassador Martin Indyk, the vice president and director of our Foreign Policy Studies program, I want to welcome all of you to the Sixth Annual Sakip Sabanci Lecture.

I want to offer a special welcome to our Turkish friends and colleagues who are here with us in Washington: Professor Ahmet Aykaç, the vice chair of Sabanci University's Board of Trustees, and Professor Üstün Ergüder, the director of the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabanci University.

And greetings, of course, to our friends in Istanbul, and in particular Güler Sabanci, who, thank goodness, I can actually see on the screen. Hi, Güler. (Applause)

MR. TALBOTT: It's terrific that she is among those participating. (Applause)

MR. TALBOTT: A little delayed reaction -- we all need to take a second or two to think about everything that we're talking about today.

It's terrific that Ms. Sabanci is among those participating in these proceedings through the wonders of technology. She has been with us in person here in Washington in the past to help us pay tribute to her late uncle, Sakip Sabanci.

He was one of the truly leading visionary business leaders of the last century in his country. He was also a champion, not just of Turkey's economic reforms but a champion of its democratic reforms as well, and he was an eloquent advocate of Turkey's aspiration and its destiny to join the European Union.

I suppose, having had the honor and pleasure of Ms. Sabanci's being with us here in Washington for these last number of years, it's only fair that she should this year be part of the proceedings on the other end of this global dialogue, at that superb university in that beautiful city on the Bosphorus. She will offer her own words of welcome in just a moment.

Every year, the Sabanci Lecture has been a timely and important event, and that's primarily by virtue of the guest of honor who is giving the lecture. For this year's lecture, the event is something of a homecoming. For Brookings, Phil Gordon is one of our own, and we're mighty proud of him. He spent nine distinguished years on these premises after serving in government back in the 1990s. Phil was not just present at the creation of the Sabanci Lectureship; he was, in fact, the creator of it in his capacity as the founding Director of our Center on the United States and Europe.

Now he's back in public service as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia. That makes him responsible for America's relations with 50 countries. Within the scope of his responsibilities, Turkey is, of course, of special importance. That is for reasons that are well understood by all of you, both here in Washington and on the Istanbul side of the conversation, but it will be better understood when we finish our discussion with Phil.

Moderating that discussion will be Fiona Hill, who is the current director of the Center on the U.S. and Europe here at Brookings. She passed through the revolving door of Brookings as a returnee from government around the time that Phil was decamping for Foggy Bottom.

One last thought: the U.S.-Turkish relationship has always been multidimensional. Some of those dimensions have been complicated. The current moment is no exception. That makes it especially appropriate that we would have as our Sabanci lecturer today

someone who can speak authoritatively for the executive branch of the United States Government.

Before giving Phil the floor, let me ask his and my mutual friend, Güler Sabanci, to say a few words.

MS. SABANCI: Well, Strobe, Phil, thank you very much. From here, from Istanbul, as you have rightly said, this is the Sixth Annual Sakip Sabanci Lecture, which is jointly programmed and delivered together with the Brookings Institution and Sabanci University, which is an excellent example of our six-year relationship together with the Brookings Institution. I first thank for those in both institutions for their dedication to this event.

Second, we are here, to be here in Istanbul. I have been, as you said, five times. In the first five lectures I was in Washington, and this year I am in Istanbul together with the Sabanci University students and its faculty. I must say it's very energizing to be here. And together with our new president, Nihat Berker, we'd like to welcome all of you for this lecture.

And, of course, dear friend Strobe has so well put forward the aim of this lecture which has been the homage for the legacy of my late uncle, Sakip Sabanci, who most of you know he was not only an achiever in the business side, but he was most well known for his being a philanthropist and a person who dedicated himself to education and to excellence in education. I'm proud today that we are at the Sabanci University which he has been the honorary chairman of this university from the foundation, and that we are able to realize what he has dreamed of in his lifetime -- a lecture series for Sakip Sabanci in an international platform each year which becomes an important platform for exploring Turkey's role in the world and also Turkey's relationship with the USA.

And, as my dear friend again, Strobe, has said this cannot be a better moment of really listening to a dear friend, Phil Gordon, who has been actually the creator of this lecture series six years ago.

We are looking forward, Phil, listening to you, and I am sure the Sabanci University students and the attendees will have lots of questions to ask you in your new capacity, which is of course during a time of a challenging world. You are leading a very important responsibility, and we are very proud to have you with us today as the Sakip Sabanci Lecturer of the sixth lecture of this event.

With these remarks, I again thank for all of you attending this event, and I'm looking forward of listening to Mr. Gordon and his speech on behalf of all of us. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. TALBOTT: Thank you very much, Güler Sabanci.

Phil has gone to heroic efforts to be with us today, despite the press of his business and that of the Secretary of State. He is leaving straight from this event to go out to Andrews Air Force Base to get aboard Secretary Clinton's plane to fly to Moscow on a very important mission. He needs to be out of here at the stroke of 11:30. Otherwise, he -- and from my standpoint, worse, I -- will be in trouble with his boss. So I will ask -- I assure you there will be discipline on his part. I will ask for discipline on yours when we come to the need of the program.

Ladies and gentlemen, in Washington and in Istanbul, it's my honor to turn over the lectern to somebody that I can now call the Honorable Phil Gordon. (Applause)

MR. GORDON: Strobe, Güler, thank you so much. It truly is a pleasure to be back at Brookings and especially to be giving the Sixth Annual Sakip Sabanci Lecture.

As Strobe said, this is really a homecoming for me. I spent nine years, nine great years, working at Brookings. Strobe is a longtime colleague and friend. We worked

together in the Clinton Administration. We worked together at Brookings. And I continue to look for his wise counsel, and look for and receive his wise counsel, and am constantly inspired by his leadership.

Strobe, I want to tell you that even though President Obama and Secretary Clinton did everything they could to deplete the ranks at Brookings, we've declared a ceasefire for the moment, and I'm delighted to see that the institution is really thriving even after we gutted your ranks. And I'm really grateful to you and Güler Sabanci and the rest of the team for inviting me to give this lecture today.

I'm especially pleased to be giving the Sabanci Lecture, an event that I am proud to say I played some part in. I think Strobe and Güler went a little bit far in calling me the creator of it. There are plenty of people in the front row and elsewhere in this room that had the same vision that I did, which was to try to put together an event that would enable us to highlight the importance of Turkey and to foster a dialogue between Washington and Istanbul, between Americans and Turks about all of the critical issues that our two countries face today.

I'm delighted to see that we have maintained the tradition of including Sabanci University students and faculty by video link, one of the things that makes this lecture so unique, and I do look forward to hearing from colleagues in Istanbul today. Güler, I have no doubt that you are right, that there will be many challenging and interesting questions posed from Turkey today.

The growth and success of Sabanci University in Istanbul, and this lecture in Washington are both testament to the vision of the man for whom they are named -- Sakip Sabanci, not only a successful businessman, but a great philanthropist. His contributions to the intellectual, cultural and economic life of his country were major forces behind Turkey's continued development and modernization. And the Sabanci

Lecture was established to highlight Turkey's increasing importance in world affairs and to promote Turkey's reform and integration into Europe, causes which Sakip Sabanci championed.

I think the past several years have only confirmed the importance of this forum and of these issues, and that is precisely why I'm so delighted to have the opportunity to address these issues with you today.

The topic that I want to talk about is the relationship between the United States and Turkey, which is a dynamic and multifaceted relationship that is beneficial to both countries. This, today, could hardly be a more important or timely subject, and this is a particularly important moment I think to reflect on it.

Almost a year ago, President Obama traveled to Turkey during his first overseas trip. It was a conscious choice to add Turkey to a planned itinerary of some summits. He went there to deliver a message of partnership, and he said, "Turkey and the United States must stand together and work together to overcome the challenges of our time."

Turkey and the United States have been partners for decades, and that partnership is as important today as it has ever been. When Secretary Clinton went on her first trip to Europe, she also made a point of going to Turkey, and she spoke of Turkey as a critical partner.

The reasons why the President and the Secretary traveled to Turkey early in the administration's term are the reasons why I want to talk about Turkey today -- because we believe that an engaged, active and cooperative relationship with Turkey is an important interest of the United States. As the President put it, when he met Prime Minister Erdoğan at the White House in December of last year, given Turkey's history as a secular democratic state that respects the rule of law, but as also a majority Muslim nation, plays a critical role in helping to shape mutual understanding and stability and

peace, not only in its neighborhood but around the world. That is how we think about Turkey and our relationship with Turkey.

Indeed, few countries play such a crucial role in such a diverse set of important areas. How many countries in the world have borders with as diverse an array of countries as Turkey does: Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria?

With its combination of strategic economic and cultural links, Turkey's influence touches such vital concerns of both our countries as the stability of the Middle East, relations with the broader Islamic world, relations with the Caucasus and Black Sea region, transitive energy from the Caspian Basin to Europe, security and development in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and the maintenance of strong ties to Europe and the transatlantic alliance.

The geography that I have just mentioned spans some of the most sensitive and significant parts of the globe and in every one of these areas, U.S.-Turkish cooperation can be a force for progress.

This is also a timely moment to be addressing the U.S.-Turkey relationship because the dynamic nature of Turkey today is attracting the world's attention in new ways. Domestically, debates about civil-military relations and about the role of religion in society have generated enormous interest abroad and are closely followed in the United States. Economically, the last decade has seen Turkey display one of the highest rates of economic growth in the world, making Turkey one of the 20 largest global economies. In foreign affairs, Turkey has pursued an active foreign policy that has seen it interacting more intensively than ever with countries all across its neighborhood and beyond.

Indeed, whenever and wherever I travel today -- which, as Strobe suggested, is quite often -- one of the sentences I hear most often is Ahmed Davutoğlu was just here. I



will arrive in Moscow, and I don't know if they'll say that. But if he wasn't just there, he's probably on the way -- as a reflection of how intensely engaged turkey is, not just in the region, but literally around the world.

Let me be frank. The dynamism that we see in Turkey has raised questions in the minds of some observers about where Turkey is heading, and that too is a reason why this is a timely topic and a useful opportunity to discuss with you and our friends in Istanbul. It is worth addressing these questions squarely. Though phrased in different ways, the questions all eventually boil down to a single concern: Is Turkey turning away from the West?

Let me say, we don't see it that way. Turkey is an integral part of the Euro-Atlantic Alliance and has been for decades. Throughout that entire time, it has maintained strong relations with its neighbors to the West as well as its neighbors to the East. It is, to be sure, reaching out in new ways.

Turkey has always had multiple identities, but what binds the United States and Turkey together are shared interests, shared values and a commitment to partnership. We believe that Turkey is and wants to remain, anchored in the Euro-Atlantic community.

The fact that some have questioned the strength of our ties does highlight an important issue -- the relationship, which was much easier to justify when we faced a shared Soviet threat, requires hard work and attention on both sides. Today, the global challenges we face are more varied and more diffuse than they were during the Cold War. In this new environment, those of us who believe in the relationship, have to make a special effort to explain the enduring value of the partnership between the United States and Turkey.

Indeed, that enduring value is something that I really want to underscore today. On nearly every vital issue we face, the United States benefits from having Turkey as an

engaged and supportive partner. The reverse is also true; on nearly every issue that is critical to Turkey's future, the United States plays an enormously important role as a trusted friend and ally. The United States and Turkey may no longer be fighting the Cold War or containing Saddam Hussein's Iraq, but we are working together in a number of important ways.

In Afghanistan, the United States and Turkey are working together to offer a better life to the Afghan people by giving them the training and tools they need to build security and grow the economy. The United States and Turkey are working together closely on an action plan for joint assistance to the Afghan people. So far, we have worked together with Turkey to develop key economic sectors in Wardak, and soon we plan to begin cooperative projects on infrastructure and health care in Kabul. Turkey is a major contributor of forces and expertise to the NATO mission in Afghanistan, and its soldiers support the Afghan Security Forces' effort to secure the capital region of the country.

In Iraq, the Turkish government's commitment to high-level strategic cooperation with the government in Baghdad, as well as the improvement of its relations with Iraqi Kurds, have been positive contributions to Iraq's stabilization. The Iraqis just completed national elections with very robust turnout. Now the negotiations on forming a government are about to begin. It is important that all those with a stake in Iraq's path to stability allow the Iraqis to make their own decisions and encourage their Iraqi leaders to support a process that will lead to the formation of an effective government.

Iraq is now Turkey's second largest export market, after Germany, and the two countries' growing economic and commercial relationship is yet another reason why it is in Turkey's interest to build a mutually beneficial relationship with Iraq.

The United States and Turkey are also cooperating closely on counterterrorism, both to fight international terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and to battle the PKK terrorist organization in the region.

In addition, Turkey is in the process of negotiating its accession to the European Union. While we recognize that the decision is not ours, the United States continues to strongly support Turkish accession and urges Turkey to continue the democratic and political reforms necessary to complete the membership process. Further progress on promoting human rights and religious freedom, including important steps such as reopening the Halki Seminary, will move Turkey's EU prospects forward.

These reforms do more than further Turkey's EU accession bid. They also make Turkey a more democratic and modern nation. The EU has its own part to play. It can help ensure that Turkey's progress continues by making clear that the door to the EU will be open to a Turkey that fulfills the requirements for EU membership.

We remain convinced that a Turkey that meets EU membership criteria would be good for the European Union and that Turkey's effort to meet those criteria is good for Turkey.

Turkey is already playing a crucial role as a transit hub for energy to the rest of Europe -- heating homes, lighting offices and powering industry across the continent. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which came online in 2006, delivers a million barrels per day of petroleum, and in 2007 the South Caucasus pipeline began bringing natural gas from Azerbaijan to Turkey. What these various of projects and a variety of proposed future initiatives show is that Turkey will be an integral part of meeting Europe's energy needs and providing for Europe's energy security.

While Turkey plays an active role in the world stage as a European power, it has also been equally active in reaching out to its immediate neighbors. We are supportive of

the Turkish government's concept of pursuing a policy of zero problems with its neighbors. This is a lofty and admiral goal. Bringing it to fruition, as everyone recognizes, will require difficult compromises and brave leadership.

Turkey's work with Armenia to normalize relations demonstrates both the promise and the difficulty of the enterprise. It holds out the prospect of positive transformative change in the region. The steps taken so far by both countries have shown vision and courage. Last October, in the presence of Secretary Clinton as well as the foreign ministers of France, Russia, and Switzerland, and the EU high representative, the Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers signed protocols on normalizing and developing their relations.

We believe that the implementation of these protocols, leading to diplomatic ties and open borders and normal relations, would be a historic development that would benefit both countries and contribute to security and economic prosperity throughout the region. We appreciate the effort that has been made so far, and we urge both countries to ratify the protocols without preconditions and as soon as possible, a point that President Obama made on the phone to President Gül just two weeks ago: Let us not squander the historic progress already made. Ratification would bring valuable benefits to both Turkey and Armenia. All who are interested in this process must do their part to ensure that it moves forward.

Let me address in this context the resolution recently considered by the House Foreign affairs Committee. As President Obama has said, our interest remains a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts related to the events of 1915, but the best way to do that, we believe, is for the Armenian and Turkish people themselves to address this history as part of their efforts to build a future of shared peace and prosperity.

As both Secretary Clinton and Secretary and Secretary Gates have indicated, further congressional action could impede progress on the normalization of relations. For that reason, we oppose this resolution.

Another regional issue where Turkey can play a productive role is Cyprus. The United States continues to encourage the negotiations between the two communities under the auspices of the U.N. Secretary General. Turkey and Greece can also play constructive roles in helping the Cypriot parties toward a lasting solution to their differences.

We welcome as well the positive dynamic in the relationship between the Turkish and Greek prime ministers, something that Greek Prime Minister Papandreou, who I believe was very recently on this stage, spoke about when he was here in Washington last week.

We commend both Cypriot leaders for their efforts and encourage them to seize this window of opportunity to pursue negotiations leading to a settlement that reunifies Cyprus into a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation. Prime Minister Erdoğan's recent and we think very constructive comments to the Cypriot press, endorsing such a solution, were very welcome and should help bring this outcome about.

These are all issues where Turkish leadership can be constructively applied to bring about a more peaceful and prosperous neighborhood, but it is important to remember that while the concept of zero problems with neighbors is a good one, it should not be pursued uncritically or at any price. As one of the world's leading states, Turkey has international responsibilities that extend beyond its immediate neighborhood.

With respect to Iran, while the international community has sought to present a single coordinated message to Iran's government, Turkey has at times sounded a different note. We know Turkey shares our concerns about the prospect of a nuclear

armed Iran and that Turkey is supportive of international efforts to reach a diplomatic solution to concerns about Iran's nuclear program. But we also believe it to be vitally important that we avoid actions that could potentially undermine or complicate our shared goal of a peaceful diplomatic resolution of this issue. We do not believe that Turkey's decision to abstain in the IAEA vote last November helped this goal, and we hope that Turkey will join the broad group of countries at the U.N. Security Council who are seeking to hold Iran to its IAEA and Security Council obligations.

Nor should Turkey's improved relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors come at the expense of its historic allies such as Israel. We are hopeful that Turkey and Israel will work to reinforce these ties, even as Turkey develops its relationships with other states in the region. Turkey has long had good, even special, ties with Israel, and this has given Turkey an important opportunity to support peace in the Middle East, a cause I know we all support.

We in the United States also pay close attention to developments within Turkey. Obviously, decisions about Turkey's political future can and must be made only by Turks within the context of Turkey's democratic system. But, as a friend, we care about the ongoing development of successful open democracy in Turkey.

The process of reform and modernization that is so vital to Turkey's future remains an important priority. Turkey's leaders recognize this and have taken bold steps to foster a more cohesive country. The Democratization Project, which aims to protect the rights of Kurds and other minority groups, is a major step in Turkey's history. We applaud this initiative and encourage Turkey to continue to move forward. The success of this effort would go a long way in securing Turkish democracy, promoting reconciliation in Turkish society as well as advancing Turkey's case for EU accession.

But Turkey must also be careful to ensure that its hard-won success in building a secular state and strong democratic system are sustained into the future. Media freedom is one of the bedrocks of a democratic society, and no actions should be taken that appear to undermine the ability of the press to do its vital job.

The rule of law is another essential element of true democracy, and for that reason it is important that investigations or court proceedings, especially on politically sensitive cases, must be open and fully respect Turkish law.

The ability of political parties to function freely is crucial as well. In a democracy, political parties should not fear being closed down.

Citizens of Turkey deserve nothing less. The development of democratic politics is one of modern Turkey's greatest achievements, and dealing with difficult issues such as these in an exemplary manner will demonstrate to its people and to the world the strength and vitality of Turkey's democracy.

Let me end where I began, by describing what it is I believe binds the United States and Turkey together. When you consider all of the things I have talked about today, from Afghanistan to the Middle East to the European Union, energy security, it becomes clear that the alliance between the United States and Turkey is founded on a firm base of diverse and deeply shared interests. When one considers so many of the pressing challenges in the world today, it becomes equally clear that U.S.-Turkish cooperation can be a force for great progress.

But our relationship is based on more than a calculation of interests. It is rooted in shared values and a shared vision. The United States and Turkey have made a choice to establish a partnership, and with that partnership comes important responsibilities on both sides. As two large countries with broad and diverse interests, we will not always see eye to eye on every issue, but we must never forget the larger outlook that we share.

A vision of a democratic Turkey with its vibrant economy, integrated into Europe and with good relations with its neighbors is a vision that has motivated generations of Turkish leaders. It is vision we share too, and we want to help Turkey achieve it.

Thank you very much. I look forward to the discussion. (Applause)

MS. HILL: Well, thank you very much, Phil.

While Strobe and Phil are getting mics, I would just like to let everyone know how we're going to proceed with the discussion. I'd also, of course, like to acknowledge our audience in Sabanci University, and let our audience here know that there may be a two-second delay in the communications between Istanbul and Washington, D.C. So we'll have to factor that in when we're asking questions and getting the response.

We have with us in the audience today here in Washington, D.C., a really great group of observers of Turkey international affairs and also a visiting delegation of young leaders from our colleagues at the Atlantic Council who I would like to say a special welcome to. So we have a young leader contingent on both sides of our video bridge today, and we're really delighted to have the group present with us.

We have, as you can see on your screens, our moderator in Istanbul, Sabri Siari. We're really pleased to see you there.

We're going to begin on this end by asking Strobe if he would like to add something to Phil's commentary on this very important set of topics that Phil has laid out, and then we'll take two questions together from the D.C. audience and then hand over to our colleagues in Istanbul for another set of questions, and then we'll try to alternate backwards and forwards up until the hour of 11:30 on the dot. So I hope we've all synchronized our watches, and we will proceed.

Strobe, first of all, we'd like to see if you would like anything else to add before we turn to our audience.



MR. TALBOTT: Thank you, Fiona.

What I might, Phil, give you a chance to do is one of Washington's favorite activities, which is connecting the dots. This is on the subject of Iran and its nuclear program. I assume that that issue will figure very prominently in the discussions that you and Secretary Clinton will be having in Moscow. And one of the next important dates on the international diplomatic calendar in this regard is, I think, April 12th, the Nuclear Safety Summit here in Washington. What is your sense of whether there's still some possibility that Prime Minister Erdoğan might participate, and what would your hopes be in that regard?

MR. GORDON: Okay. Thanks, Strobe.

Yes, President Obama has invited the leaders of some 45 to 50 countries to Washington in mid-April to a Nuclear Security Summit, a reflection of the importance that he places on this issue, both of nuclear nonproliferation/disarmament and the security of the nuclear facilities that already exist in the world.

Turkey was one of those countries invited because of the role that it can play on this set of issues, and that invitation has been extended to Prime Minister Erdoğan, and we await a response. We would be delighted to see him. We think that this is one of the many -- I just gave a speech about the diverse, broad and very numerous issues on which we and Turkey cooperate and need to cooperate around the world, and this one is on the upper part of that list, and that's why we would be delighted to see the Prime Minister here.

You began by referring to the issue of Iran. I don't need to tell this audience how high a priority it is, that issue is, for the administration, and I addressed this as well in my remarks. Turkey has a critical role to play there as well; in joining what we think is an already broad and growing international consensus among key players that Iran needs to

be held accountable for its failure to respond positively to the approach we've made on the nuclear issue.

MS. HILL: Very good. So I will take two questions together from the audience here. I'd also like to encourage one of our young leaders to ask a question. Please don't be shy.

The first question is this gentleman here, and if you would also introduce yourself, please, for the benefit of the audience both here and in Istanbul.

QUESTIONER: Ilhan Tanir for Hurriyet Daily News. I just want to follow up on the question.

The Turkish Prime Minister just yesterday stated that speculation about Iran having a nuclear weapon is just rumors, as it's called. So my question is why there's a difference, this huge difference, on the positions of America and Turkey when it comes to the Iran issue. Is there a lack of partnership between the countries? Are there evidences that Turkey had not seen?

MS. HILL: Let me just take the next question.

MR. GORDON: Oh, I see. You're going to take a couple, yes.

MS. HILL: Yes, at the very back.

QUESTIONER: John Roberts with Platts.

There is a sort of triangle of interconnected issues which are Nagorno-Karabakh, the Armenian protocols issue, and the question of energy transit and security in the Caucasus. I'd be very interested to find out how much are the U.S. and Turkey currently working in cooperation on these three issues when, to quote one recent Azerbaijani analyst who said bluntly, if Turkey signs the protocols, which of course the U.S. would like it to do, that means there can be no Nabucco and no energy transit.

So how do you square, or if you can square a triangle, how do you relate these different aspects of the triangle to each other?

MS. HILL: Thanks a lot.

Phil?

MR. GORDON: Okay, let me start with Iran. You know you can ask if there's a difference in assessment. Turks can speak for themselves about how they assess the situation in Iran.

There are rumors, and there are what most of the world sees as facts. And the fact is, from our point of view, that Iran is in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and that key members of the international community -- the permanent members of the Security Council and Germany -- came forward to present Iran with what we thought was quite a reasonable approach to, at a minimum, buy time on the nuclear issue, to give Iran the opportunity to make clear to the world that it was not pursuing a nuclear weapons capability. Iran accepted that in principle last fall and has spent all of the time since then avoiding follow-up and responding positively to the proposals that the international community had made.

As I think I said, I think there is broad and growing consensus that Iran is not living up to its responsibilities, that it is not abiding by U.N. Security Council resolutions, that last November the members of the Board of the International Atomic Energy Agency came together and, with a very strong majority, condemned for all of the things that I just said.

We would like, if there is a gap between our analysis of the situation and Turkey's analysis, we would be happy to talk about that. We obviously have talked about it, and we continue to talk about it, which is another further reason why we need to continue this engagement among friends, because, as I said in my remarks, I am absolutely convinced

that Turkey shares our goal of preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability.

We and many other key actors in the world have real doubts on that issue and need to see Iran come forward to satisfy those doubts. And we'll continue to talk to Turkey about this, and we look forward to reaching an agreement to make sure that there are consequences for Iran for failing to do so.

On the triangle of issues -- in the Caucasus, about energy and normalization and Nagorno-Karabakh and regional peace issues -- these things are, of course, very much connected because they affect each of the countries in the region in a different way.

I strongly disagree with the notion that if Turkey and Armenia ratified the protocol on normalization of relations, it would have a negative impact on some of the other developments in the region that we also support. I think you also mentioned Nabucco and energy corridors. On the contrary, the absence of an open border and relations between Turkey and Armenia is an obstacle to an open energy corridor that would benefit the countries of the region and the recipient countries, for the energy supplies in Europe and the producing countries.

That's why we have consistently said that we think that all of these tracks are important and all should move forward, regardless of progress on the others, and that is to say Nagorno-Karabakh is a great priority for the United States. We are intensely and actively engaged. Secretary Clinton has been personally engaged. We are unceasing in our efforts to try to bring about progress and a solution on Nagorno-Karabakh.

But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't proceed on the other tracks at the same time, and Turkey-Armenia normalization is one. It would benefit both countries. It would be a positive signal towards the vision that we and, we believe, Turkey are trying to bring about in the region. And far from impeding energy flows, it would actually promote them.

So all of these things are important, but we shouldn't end -- and, of course, all of them have impacts on others including through domestic politics. But we believe that because they are each inherently important we should do all we can to move forward on all of them, in a parallel way, and take whatever progress we can get because it doesn't impede the others. It can actually help the other tracks.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much, Phil.

We'll now hand over to our colleagues in Istanbul.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Good morning, Fiona. It's nice to see you again. And, Phil, it's good to see you.

We have a large audience here in Istanbul. Lots of students and friends are here. So we're going to take as many questions as possible, and we'll make sure that you catch your plane.

So, if you have any questions, please raise your hands, and the microphone will be brought to you. Yes, it's over there. Please identify yourself.

QUESTIONER: Hi to everyone in Washington. Guz Dievos, graduate student in political science at Sabanci University.

My question is about the recent event just unveiled after Vice President Biden's visit to Israel. If I may, I would like to know how the ongoing tension between the U.S. and Israel emerged after this visit, what influence, regional stability, as well the U.S.-Turkey relations. Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Thank you.

Are we doing these one at a time or are you gathering a few? Yes, why not? Well, I'm happy to answer now if you'd like me to answer the first question.

This is obviously very important to the United States. As Strobe Talbott mentioned, Secretary Clinton is leaving in a couple of hours for Moscow, for what will be a very timely

quartet meeting where we engage with some key international partners on the situation in the Middle East with Israel and its neighbors. There have been rising tensions in the region.

I think we, the Obama Administration, made quite clear what we thought of the housing plan that was announced during the Vice President's visit. Let me say I think that's an example of what we mean when we talk about being frank even with friends. We have an important partnership with Israel and a close relationship with Israel. It goes on. It's important to us. It's important to them, but that doesn't mean that we can't disagree with them when we have a frank difference, and we've been very clear that on this particular issue we have a frank difference.

So we will be consulting our international partners, literally in the days to come, to see how we can deal with that particular issue but more broadly put things back on track towards the two-state solution that we support.

As for the U.S.-Turkey aspect of it, I don't really think there is one.

As I said in my remarks, Turkey also has had a historic and special relationship with Israel, and we would actually like to see Turkey approach its differences with Israel in the way that I just described. If you have differences, be frank about it, but try to preserve that special relationship so that you can have leverage and push the situation in the right direction.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Thank you. We'll take two more questions from Istanbul, and then we'll go back to Washington. One, two, yes.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Samul Sadan, political science Ph.D. student.

Mr. Gordon, as you have mentioned in your speech, the U.S. has been a strong supporter of solutions in Cyprus. Now that the current Cypriot communities are at the negotiating table once again, I was wondering what concrete policies the U.S. is pursuing

for a solution and, more importantly, if the negotiation fails once again like it did in 2004, what would be the reaction of the American administration this time. Thank you.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Thank you very much.

As you said, we have been strongly supportive of a settlement on Cyprus and indeed see this as a critical window of opportunity. You have leaders of both communities in place who we believe are committed to a political settlement, know each other well, have committed to direct talks in seeking such a settlement. I believe they just met for was it the 70th time? It may have been more than that, literally, in the most intense period of direct engagement between Cypriot leaders I think ever. That's a good thing, and that's why this is a window of opportunity.

We are concerned that if the parties miss this window there might not be such a window for some time, which would be regrettable, because it would leave the communities divided and fail to provide those solutions on governance and security and refugees and territory that all sides would benefit from. We genuinely believe, if I can use an American expression that a settlement would be win-win, and both sides would benefit.

Ultimately, it is up to the Cypriots. We will continue to be supportive. As I said, we believe that Greece and Turkey also have a major role to play. And we'll do all we can to facilitate that settlement. In the end, the leaders in the communities on the island are going to have to decide that it's in their interest to reach a political settlement. We believe that it is.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Thank you, Fiona. I think it's your turn, Washington.

MS. HILL: Another question, actually I'll take two together, Katinka and then Tulin because you had your hand up before.

QUESTIONER: Hello. I'm Katinka Barysch from the Center for European Reform in London.

What struck me about this fascinating debate so far, if this had been a couple of years ago, at least a few of the initial questions, especially from Istanbul, would have concerned the Turkish relationship with the European Union which is something we don't seem to be very interested anymore.

You did mention the importance of the EU accession progress for Turkey's internal development. Can you also make a link to the issues that you seem to define as U.S. priorities: Turkey's regional role, its relationship with Iran, its relationship with Russia and its relationship with the Arab world? What is the link between the prospects for EU accession and Turkey's wider role in the world? Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks. And Tulin, just behind.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, Fiona.

Mr. Gordon, thank you. This is Tulin Daloglu with Habertürk. It's a daily newspaper in Turkey.

I'd like to thank the late Sakip Sabanci to start the lecture series. I think since the Obama Administration came to office this is the first speech by a U.S. official in Washington solely dedicated to the U.S.-Turkey relationship.

That said, this also comes at a time when Turkey does not have an ambassadorial representation in the U.S. capital as a result of a passage of a resolution at a House Foreign Affairs committee concerning the Armenian genocide.

So my question is: This isn't the first time that Turkey has defeated such resolutions at the House. One in 2007 really got defeated at a very critical time. How likely is it this time for this resolution to come to a vote at the floor the House, and how much effort does it require to defeat it this time, and what do you think about the numbers



that makes you nervous about the likelihood of this resolution to have a passage this time around at the House? Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Okay, I'll do this in reverse order, to start with the House Foreign Affairs vote. I'm sure Strobe has someone at Brookings better placed than me to handicap congressional votes and numbers, but I can give you a broad perspective on the issue.

First, let me start with you noted the withdrawal of the Turkish ambassador. We regret that. We would like to see him here. We want to remain engaged with Turkey. I have been talking about an intense and vast program of issues on which we work with Turkey, and nothing should interfere with that. It's too important. And we want to engage with Turkey as much and intensely as possible. So we'd like to see the ambassador come back, and he's most welcome as soon as he feels it appropriate.

The vote I think on the resolution on March 5th, I've made clear, as have had other administration officials, what our view is. It passed that committee in a narrow vote. I can't, you know, assess the future. Congress is an independent body, and it will do what it will do.

What I can do is express what we think about the issue, and we've done that. We feel that further action on the resolution would interfere with this process that we think is hugely important, and we think it's best for the countries to deal with that themselves. So I would say I do think that a lot of members of Congress recognize what's at stake, and understand and agree with the perspective of the administration that I have described.

Katinka's question about Turkey-EU, it is true that we most often think and talk about this in internal terms for Turkey because the main criteria from the EU are mostly focused on domestic criteria, economic criteria, democracy criteria, human rights criteria.

The belief is that to get into the EU, by definition, would require internal changes in Turkey, and that would be a good thing for Turkey. And that is how the debate proceeds.

Obviously, people also need to think about what the foreign policy impact would be. I think it is important to understand that, and we've clearly seen that, being a member of the European Union does not require countries to sacrifice their foreign policies. Some regret that; some don't.

But I don't think that Turks need, or anyone else needs, to think that somehow if Turkey had important interests with regional countries that this would be sacrificed as part of joining the European Union. On the contrary, you could argue that these ties and relationships that Turkey has, and the important role it plays in the world, would be a boost to the EU as a foreign policy actor by bringing in such a strong player with experience in other parts of the world.

MS. HILL: All right, good. Back to you in Istanbul.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Okay, thank you.

Questions from the floor? Yes, there is one here, and there's another one there. Okay.

QUESTIONER: Ersink Elijul; I study Turkish politics, and my question is focused more on your earlier comments about the way forward so far as the protocol is concerned.

Now yesterday the Turkish Prime Minister was in London, and he showed a way out, and his interpretation is that if the Minsk Group moves in and somehow changes the calculations in the Caucasus, mainly makes some moves so that the Nagorno-Karabakh issue can somehow be solved, then Turkey will be moving, so far as the protocol is concerned, if I understood him correctly.

Now my question is I was considering Minsk Group as one of these zombie organizations in the world. You know. They're established at some point. They look alive, but they're pretty much dead, not doing anything. Or they're asleep for the moment. So is it possible, so far as your government is concerned, to breathe life into the Minsk Group? If so, what would be your expectations of Russia within the Minsk Group and the overall Russian approach to the Transcaucasus?

Do the Russians want to somehow solve the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh? Do you believe that they would like to move on this issue in the foreseeable future of the next 20 years or so, for example?

If that is not the case, you know, is there a way out of the mess that we have developed so far as the protocol is concerned, or maybe consider the protocol pretty much dead for the time being? Thank you.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Well, thank you.

I think our Minsk Group envoy, the very talented Ambassador Bob Bradtke would be surprised to learn that the Minsk Group is a zombie organization, as he shuttles tirelessly among European capitals, working intensely and intensively on this issue on behalf of Secretary Clinton.

I cannot overstate how active we and our Minsk Group partners have been in recent months, in trying to make progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. A settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh would not only bring peace and stability to Armenia and Azerbaijan, but it would contribute to peace throughout the region and to the energy corridors that we have discussed and again to the fulfillment of our common vision.

We are very active on that front, but let me also restate what I said before. It is inherently important, but it should move forward with other issues. We complicate things

when we link them together. Turkey has made its perspective clear on how important it thinks progress in Nagorno-Karabakh is, and we don't disagree. That's why we're working so actively for it.

Where we do have a disagreement is whether the ratification of the protocols should be held up until other problems are solved. The fact of the matter is, as I've already said, we think that not only would ratification of the protocols and moving forward on normalization benefit Turkey and Armenia, but it wouldn't hinder progress on other issues, but I think you could argue it would actually facilitate progress on other issues.

So we are going to continue to do what we have been doing, which is doing everything we can to make progress on Nagorno-Karabakh, and I hope we'll do that before your 20-year deadline comes up, but also to encourage Turkey and Armenia to ratify the protocols because it's in their common interest and our interest.

Let me see if Strobe Talbott, who has extensive experience on this set of issues, would like to add to that.

MR. TALBOTT: I'm a former zombie. (Laughter) I spent, or I sometimes felt misspent, six years as the American co-chair of the so-called Minsk Group. I say so-called because, among its many failures, it never met in Minsk. But while I found the experience educational, I also found it to be profoundly frustrating and exhausting. I never quite felt like the walking dead, but I get the point of your question.

But I want to go to a substantive part of your question, and that is the role of Russia. I do not think that the Minsk process will ever succeed unless, and until, Russia resolves its own -- how shall I put it politely -- ambivalence about whether it really wants stability on its soft underbelly, in the South Caucasus and elsewhere.

I think there has been a contradiction in Russian policy, arguably going back to early Soviet times, of divide and conquer, and in keeping the former republics of the

U.S.S.R., now independent states, weak and in some cases internally divided, and in one case with 20 percent of its territory now virtually annexed by the Russian Federation. And that's all part of a Russian policy that makes it very difficult for the Minsk Group to succeed.

So I think whether it's 10, 20, or 50 years that we're talking about, an awful lot depends on Moscow.

MR. GORDON: Can I just add a word on that? I realize I failed to address the Russian part of it.

This perspective is one that we hear. I can say that in our experience with Russians on this set of issues, they have been nothing but constructive in trying to bring about progress on the Minsk Group. The parties themselves have had difficulty reaching agreements; that is obvious. But we have worked extensively and well with Russia, and we'll no doubt be talking about it in the coming days in Moscow as well, with what seems to be a common interest in resolving this dispute, notwithstanding the questions that the former deputy secretary raised about Russian perspectives.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much.

DO we have another question in Istanbul or shall we turn over to D.C.?

SABANCI MODERATOR: We have lots of questions in Istanbul. Here is one question, and we'll take two questions at a time. So we'll expect Phil to answer two of them at one time. Okay.

QUESTIONER: Hello. I'm Sardy, a student in social and political science.

I would like to ask that do you see any similarities between Turkish and U.S. governments' relations with media.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Yes, questions? I think there is a question in the back.

QUESTIONER: My name is Gurkam Turk. I'm a second year student at Sabanci University.

You already answered my question partially, but I want to learn that what is the United States' exact view about Turkey's possible plans to establish its own nuclear energy plants to supply its increasing electrical power demand. Thank you.

MR. GORDON: My views about Turkey's plans to?

MS. HILL: Establish its own nuclear power to generate electricity.

MR. GORDON: Right. Okay. First on the media question which I know has been a hot topic, and I'm glad for the opportunity to address it, I don't know that I can get into an analysis of differences and similarities, but one clear similarity is that Turkey and the United States both have vibrant and active and free-wheeling media. I have done plenty of interviews in Turkey and seen the Turkish press, and it is at least as active as our own.

I mentioned this issue in my remarks. As a policy matter, we believe that is critically important. A democracy thrives on, and needs, an open and free media. So we're always going to be concerned about any activities that appear to be designed to constrain the rights of a free media, and that is something I think is in Turkey's interest, to make clear that nobody has these perspectives.

It is a bedrock of a democratic society -- to have open debate and free media. If you look around the world and compare countries that you would consider free and not free, the media question is at the heart of that. So I don't want to say the United States is a model for anything, media or otherwise, but I do think that in this country we have the healthy sort of open media that a democracy needs, and people are free to criticize the government, and the government has the ability to explain its positions adequately. I do think that is something that is critically important in Turkey as well.

As for nuclear power plants, if Turkey deems it useful in this world of constraints on energy supplies to develop a civil nuclear energy capability, and that's cost effective and safe, then it's a good thing. The United States is looking at expanding its own civil energy production.

MS. HILL: Very good, thanks. I'd like to actually get some of our visitors from the young leaders from the Atlantic Council to ask a question. The gentleman here, and then I think there's a lady with a light jacket behind, yes, please. I'll take two questions here. Don't worry, I won't forget everyone else.

QUESTIONER: I'm Sarp Kalkan of TEPAV a think tank located in Ankara and a member of the Young Turkey/Young America program.

Actually, the democratization process in Turkey gives more rights to Kurds and is closely related with the developing relationship with Iraqi Kurdistan. After these processes are completed, do you see a possible future collaboration between Iraq and Turkey beyond economic integration, especially after the U.S. troops are returned?

MS. HILL: Can I take the next question as well?

QUESTIONER: I'm Didem Akan, from the Young Turkey/Young America program and a member of UNICEF Turkey as well.

I believe that Turkey will likely fulfill its international responsibilities under the NPT, but we also remember the statement by the chief of the general secretary that I would like to quote: "Iran's nuclear capabilities constitute the number two security concern for Turkey in the Middle Eastern context, the number one being the situation in Iraq."

So do you think that after Turkey being more comfortable about Iran and could focus on Iraq, do you have any situation or possibility on your agendas regarding this? Thank you.

MS. HILL: So that's two questions really about cooperation on Iraq and questions of the Kurds and then the NPT responsibility. And there was another question, we'll just take that and then hand back to Istanbul.

QUESTIONER: Sedat Ergin of Hurriyet. During your conference, you said that it is important that investigations or court proceedings, especially on particularly sensitive cases, must be open and fully respect Turkish law. Can you elaborate on that?

MS. HILL: Did you hear the question, Phil?

MR. GORDON: Yes.

MS. HILL: On court cases and Turkish law.

QUESTIONER: Can I ask one more?

MS. HILL: If this is a very quick follow-up question, please, yes. Please introduce yourself, Nur.

QUESTIONER: Nur Batur from Sabah Daily.

And just as a follow-up, there's one interesting sentence that I have seen or heard, if you could elaborate as well. You say that Turkey must also be careful to ensure that its hard-won successes in building a secular state and strong democratic system are sustained into the future. Do you have concerns that this hard-won success in building a secular state in Turkey is in danger? Is there a threat? And secondly, is the strong democratic system under also threat?

MS. HILL: Thanks.

MR. GORDON: Lots of good questions. Let me start with the last.

I was talking, when I said we need to address some of these issues frankly and squarely, and I was talking about a perception there about Turkey moving away from the rest. This is a question exists. We shouldn't deny that it exists. There are some who



pose that question: Is Turkey moving away from its secular orientation? What is the meaning of the AKP government?

When I said that Turkey must ensure that those traditions are respected, I'm responding to that really existing question or doubt about the subject. I'm not saying that I have that doubt or suggesting that the government or anyone else is doing that. But when such a question exists, I think the onus is on those in power to reassure. And that question does exist, and I think that the government in power has been conscious of this.

The reality is that in a democracy even majority rule requires the governing majority to be very sensitive to traditions, including Turkey's secular tradition, and to positions held by so many people in the country. That's what I was saying. I think it's important to be sensitive to that, and I think that the Turkish government has been, and is, sensitive to that.

Again, in sort of reverse order, the question about court cases and can I elaborate, the shortest answer is no, by which I mean I'm not going to sit here and get into a detailed perspective of what I think the result of a court case should be. I don't have the information to do that. I'm not sure Turks in every case have the information to do that. And it wouldn't be appropriate for me to do that.

So I'm talking about broad principles that I think are important, that should guide Turkey's leaders and judiciary and media as Turks have what needs to be a Turkish debate, and these broad principles about rule of law and respecting minorities, transparency which is critical. That's what should guide Turkey, but it's not for me to have a detailed view on the substance of some of these cases.

The question about the Iraqi Kurds and Kurds in Turkey let me say I think this really is a historic opportunity. Katinka said what we might have been talking about three or four years ago in the EU. A few years ago, we would have had a big debate about

Turkey and the Kurds and Iraq, and we wouldn't have guessed, or I think most would be pleasantly surprised, to hear what the tone of the debate is now, which is about a potential historic transformation of Turkey's relationship with Kurds in Turkey and Kurds in Northern Iraq.

And I think that the trend on that is a very positive one and could lead, in the wake of tremendous violence and terrorism over decades, leading to tens of thousands of deaths and displace people and a hostile relationship with some parties in Iraq, to one of mutual trade, mutual respect and security. I think that the parties are well on their way to doing that, and we support it, and we welcome it.

And then finally, I didn't exactly get the NPT question and Iraq.

MS. HILL: It was more of a question, as I believe, that if the Iraq security issue is resolved, whether then Turkey would be more amenable perhaps to working with the U.S. on Iran. So it was really a follow-up in many respects from the last question.

MR. GORDON: Okay. Well, first, let me say what I wanted to say, which is I really welcome this group here. I think it's a terrific initiative and glad to have them with us.

I think I have said what I have to say about Iran. I believe Turkey is committed to the same goal as us, but the NPT that goes back to the rule of law. If we're going to have these treaties and we're going to have the U.N. Security Council, we should do what we can to ensure that those things are respected. I think in this case it is pretty clear that Iran is not in compliance, and having Turkey with us on that would be critically important because for some of these regional reasons that we've said.

MS. HILL: I'm going to hand back to the last questions to our colleagues in Istanbul. I think we have about six or seven minutes left in our time. So, Sabri, over to you.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Okay, questions? One question here and another question here. Okay, we have two questions, yes.

QUESTIONER: I'll make it very fast.

SABANCI MODERATOR: Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: Lenore Martin, I'm a Fulbright Scholar here this semester. So I'm butting in a bit.

I'm curious if you can address the issue of Turkey as an energy corridor to Europe and in this capacity Turkey has just recently agreed to have Russia do an exploration to perhaps possibly see South Stream developed. Turkey has also agreed to help develop the South Pars oil field in Iran. So I'd like to hear your reaction to the two sides of Turkey as an energy corridor to Europe -- the one to help Europe through the energy issues and the other, these two other issues which might have a different view from Washington than they do from Ankara.

MR. GORDON: Good question.

SABANCI MODERATOR: We have another question, Phil. Just one second.

QUESTIONER: Okay. I'm afraid you'll have to hear another question before you answer them.

Hi, Phil. This is Ekar Tuden, and I have two short questions.

One of them, you never made a reference to economic relations between the United States and Turkey. In that area, as you know, there has been certain Turkish expectations, and I wonder if you'd like to comment on those.

Then if I might get back to the Armenian-Turkish relations for a moment, the indignation being displayed by the Turkish government I think derives from the fact that they are convinced, as most of the Turkish public, that the Obama Administration did not

necessarily do very much to stop the congressional committee in its voting, and your earlier answer in fact appeared also to be reasonably detached.

I am just going to ask a question that you can answer yes or no. The information we have here is that Mr. Obama tried to use the congressional vote as a bargaining chip to persuade the Turks to bring to the floor of the parliament the protocols. Is that true, yes or no? Thank you. (Laughter)

MS. HILL: Well, Phil, there you are.

MR. GORDON: Okay. Yes, let me -- I'm not looking at the watch to avoid that difficult question, but because I'm being signaled that we have time constraint. But I promise I'll answer your question. I'll answer all the questions briefly.

The energy question, that's a critically important issue to the Obama Administration. We've said that energy security in Europe is a strong interest of the United States. That's why we pushed forward with the U.S.-EU Energy Council. We believe that when countries are excessively dependent for energy that not only has economic consequences but potentially political consequences.

And to deal with the energy dependence issue, we do need an energy corridor across Turkey. This is not a new thing. When Strobe and I were colleagues in the Clinton Administration, that's when the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline idea was launched and pursued because we already had that view then, and we continue to have it now. So Turkey is critically important, and there are a lot of ways in which Turkey can facilitate this common interest and, by the way, benefit from it as well.

That said, it won't surprise you to hear me say that we don't think now is a good time to be developing Iranian oil fields. That would send the wrong signal to Iran. We oppose it. Others oppose it as well. There's broad cooperation from the international

community not to develop Iranian energy resources right now, and we think that's the right thing to do.

Let me say, if I haven't made it clear enough, on the economic issue, that the U.S.-Turkey economic relationship is something we are intensely focused on. We have taken new initiatives since the beginning of the Obama Administration to develop that relationship. It's one of the things that President Obama and President Gül agreed to do on that first Obama visit to Turkey. I noted that Turkey is one of the fastest growing countries in the world over the past few years and is the 17th biggest economy in the world, and, believe me, we're paying attention to that in our mutual interests.

Finally, on Armenia, on the resolution, I think I've said it already, but again to be clear I think the administration has been clear and consistent in its view on this issue for the entire past year. Secretary Clinton and others made our view clear prior to the House vote. We've made it clear since the House vote, and we don't want to see anything that would interfere with the progress that we want to see happen in the region.

I can give you a clear answer to your specific question as well. No, we don't. We have no interest in using these votes as leverages or messages or anything else to Turkey.

Our view on the protocols is clear. We want them to move forward on their basis because they're important, and we're not linking it to anything else. We're not linking it domestically. Our view on the resolution is clear, and we see the normalization issue as in a separate track and want to work with Turkey to bring that track and our common vision to fruition.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much, Phil.

Strobe, would you like to say a final word as we wrap up?

I mean obviously a great word of thanks to our audiences both here in Washington, D.C. and in Istanbul, to Güler Sabanci and all of our colleagues, Sabri Sayari and others, for taking part in this and for giving Phil a good grilling on his return in his new role to Brookings. I think it's been a great discussion.

And, Strobe, any final thoughts from the podium here in D.C.?

MR. TALBOTT: Just to thank Phil for returning that good grilling with some very, very clear and helpful answers. I think this has been a discussion that sheds the right kind of light into an area that's gotten too much heat in a number of respects.

I would ask please that everybody here on the Brookings side stay put, stay in this room, so that Phil has a clean shot at that revolving door, so that he can catch up with Secretary Clinton for his trip.

But please all join me in thanking Phil and our colleagues.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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