



**U.S.-TURKISH COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A
MODEL OF PROGRESS**

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XIII. ASSOCIATION OF TURKISH-AMERICAN SCIENTISTS (ATAS)

*GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (GWU) ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ON SCIENCE AND EDUCATION*

Washington, D.C. - March 24, 2001

I know that you recognize the names of many prominent Turkish citizens who are Fulbright Program alumni. A sampling includes Ziya Aktaş, Üstün Ergüder, Şükrü Gürel, Kemal Gürüz, Rüşdü Saraçoğlu, Salih Memecan, and of course my fellow panelist, Dr. Yılmaz Argüden. Senator Fulbright referred to this exchange program as reaching the best and the brightest, and these are terrific examples. Even Süleyman Demirel, Turkey's former President and Prime Minister, studied in the United States as an Eisenhower Program fellow -- another important exchange program that we support.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished fellow panelists, ladies and gentlemen --

I am extremely pleased to be part of this important conference, and to have the opportunity to share my thoughts with you about cooperation between the United States and Turkey in the realm of higher education. My remarks will be principally from my perspective as the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. As many of you know, this State Department Bureau that I direct is responsible for sponsoring and administering a constellation of programs and activities that promote long-term mutual understanding between people of the United States and people from throughout the world.

We do so through our academic programs like the world-renowned Fulbright Program for 5,000 U.S. and foreign students, teachers and scholars annually -- through linkages between U.S. colleges and universities and counterpart institutions overseas -- and through the work of a network of 400 advising

centers around the world that counsel foreign students interested in studying on U.S. college and university campuses. We do so through our cadre of dedicated and skillful English Language Officers overseas who conduct teacher-training efforts in the field of teaching English as a foreign language and produce and distribute related teaching materials.

We do so through our grants to nearly 5,000 international visitors each year - professionals in labor, government, politics, education, business, media, arts and science -- who travel to the United States to consult with American colleagues in these fields and to experience America first-hand. And we also promote mutual understanding through our grants awarded to U.S. community organizations, professional associations, universities and other non-governmental organizations to support theme-oriented project-related partnerships with counterpart organizations abroad.

All of these "people-to-people" activities -- the gist of what we refer to as public diplomacy -- have taken on increased importance in this post Cold War world, where bipolarity has given way to a globalized, market-driven, information-based interdependent world. Today, it is evident that our ability to direct events through military strength or through negotiations between governments is now equaled by our ability as individuals in education, business and industry, the sciences, government, and in society at large to participate meaningfully in a global community. This includes peoples' participation in the world matrix of more than 10,000 non-governmental organizations. The term "public diplomacy" is becoming increasingly important in the lexicon of the State Department as we go about the business of foreign affairs.

Our State Department-supported public diplomacy efforts between the United States and Turkey, both historically and currently, have played and continue to play a key role in building educational cooperation between our two countries. I look forward to talking about that. But allow me to digress for a moment.

I am particularly delighted to address you today, not just because of my role at the State Department, but because, as indicated when I was introduced, I have had a long-standing, wonderful relationship with Turkey. I first set foot in Turkey in 1968 when I went to visit my then-fiancé Robert who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Turhal, Tokat. The impressions of that trip are still very vivid, including the thrill of crossing the Bosphorus to the Asian side and my first train ride to Ankara across the rolling Anatolian plateau. The hospitality I received in Turhal was extraordinary. There was no television in Turkey in 1968 and I was the first American woman ever to visit Turhal. The entire town came out to greet me. Children reached up to touch my hair. I was fed, and fed and fed. In 1976, Robert and I returned to Turkey -- he on a Fulbright grant to research his book on the early Turkish novel, and I to teach American literature at Bogazici University. Those were terrific years, and I am sure I learned much more from my students than they learned from me. We returned in 1978 -- Robert as the Vice Consul in Istanbul, and I to teach again at Bogazici University. I joined the Foreign Service in 1980, and my first assignment was, guess where -- to Ankara as Assistant Cultural Attaché. Over the years, artık bizler Türkleştik. Bodrum'da bir evimiz var. Her sene, oğlumuzla birlikte, ailecek Gököy'deyiz. Oğlumuz da Türkiye'yi çok seviyor. Şu anda, onun üniversitedeki odasında, bir Türk bayrağı asılı! In 1997, I was assigned once again to Ankara from Vienna and only just returned to Washington in July 2000. I know and understand Turkey very well.

Let me now return to the topic at hand -- educational collaboration between Turkey and the United States -- and our role in that important effort. As a general statement, I am happy about the frequency, intensity and diversity of cooperation between our two countries, whether supported by the respective governments or done through the private sector. I am particularly pleased to note that much of this interaction goes further than simply building bridges of intellectual understanding between our two societies, important as that is. Much of this collaboration addresses specific needs and interests of Turkey and of the United States in a very proactive way, based on reasoned assessments of how each country might assist the other. This practical approach is testament to the common ethos of both the American and the Turkish citizenry -- forward-thinking, building on the past to affect the future, and firmly believing that a nation's true strength results from an amalgamation of the different groups making up its society.

The Turkish experience is based on three millennia of history -- from the Hittites to Constantine to Justinian and Theodora to Fatih Mehmet to Suleyman to Ataturk -- the center of three world empires -- blending rich and diverse traditions with the contemporary.

The American experience is based on a much shorter time span -- nearly four centuries if we're generous. This country has been built by immigrants from the earth's four corners, creating a composite of beliefs, cultures and customs from "the old country" while simultaneously contributing to the American mosaic and our country's unifying and unique societal patterns.

It's fascinating to see that similar ways of thinking in the United States and Turkey have been produced by profoundly different circumstances. Yet these commonalities have resulted in educational collaboration in a host of ways. Let's explore a number of programmatic examples.

Ambassador Pearson made reference to the Fulbright Program and the central role that it has played in promoting and enhancing U.S.-Turkish educational relations, now for half a century. The program clearly is the cornerstone of government-sponsored exchange programs between our two countries, building long-term relationships between scholars and institutions in virtually every academic field.

Dr. William Bader, our recent Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs spoke eloquently about the Fulbright Program and its impact on the United States and Turkey at the "Higher Education in the New Millennium" conference convened at Bogazici University last Fall. Some of you were there. Indeed, it is fitting that the conference, exploring common educational issues our two countries are addressing, was sponsored by the Fulbright Program itself, as part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the program between Turkey and the United States. The Fulbright Program has played a significant role in transporting an understanding and appreciation of the intellectual and scientific theory and method around the world and in expanding our knowledge base, on an international scale, in the arts, the humanities, the natural and social sciences, and in the professions. The program has made ever-lasting contributions to educational ties and scholarship between our two nations, building an important foundation of trust based on direct interaction between thousands of American and Turkish citizens. Indeed, it has simultaneously helped each country to internationalize, particularly in earlier years, at a time when international interaction between peoples and cultures was not a regular occurrence.

I know that you recognize the names of many prominent Turkish citizens who are Fulbright Program alumni. A sampling includes Kemal Guruz, Ziya Aktas, Ustun Erguder, Mustafa Erdik, Sukru Gurel, Nermin Abadan-Unat, Yasar Sutbeyaz, Balkan Naci Islimyeli, Ahmet Kanneci, Rusdu Saracoglu, Salih Memecan, and of course my fellow panelist, Dr. Yilmaz Arguden. Senator Fulbright referred to this exchange program as reaching the best and the brightest, and these are terrific examples. Even Suleyman Demirel, Turkey's former President and Prime Minister, studied in the United States as an Eisenhower Program fellow -- another important exchange program that we support.

The Fulbright Program has many other types of successes. On a very practical bent, the pioneering work a decade ago of U.S. Fulbright grantees and of our English Language Officers, in close collaboration with Bilkent University, established what is now a top-flight graduate program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. This has been most important in assisting Turkey in addressing its need for EFL teachers. Further, we have played a role in establishing a Turkish affiliate of TESOL, the international organization devoted to teachers of English to speakers of other languages. This Turkish chapter is particularly interested in promoting English teaching throughout Turkey's lycées.

At present, with the rapidly growing demand for teachers in Turkey, a new initiative being undertaken by the Fulbright Commission and by Bilkent University, in consultation with the Turkish government, will enable twenty-five graduate students from Bilkent's Faculty of Education to participate in an eight-week teacher-training seminar at Iowa State University this coming summer. The seminar will focus on student-centered teaching methodologies and new technologies for the classroom, with these pre-service teachers also interning in nearby school districts. After completing their degrees, these educators will ultimately serve as teacher-trainers in lycées throughout Turkey.

At the dawn of this new millennium, and keenly aware of the changing configurations of the actors on the world stage, we are building new modalities for the Fulbright Program. Long a program whose underpinnings included bilateralism between the United States and each of 140 partner countries, we are now developing multilateral efforts, such as the Aegean Initiative involving Turkey, Greece and the United States. This effort will sponsor joint research projects among Turkish, Greek and American scholars. These are important examples of how this very special program has served our two countries, part of the Program's global legacy.

Let's look beyond the Fulbright Program at other Department of State-supported efforts involving Turkey and the United States. For more than thirty-five years, we have been pleased to support the operations of the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), a consortium of U.S. universities established to support American and Turkish humanities and social science research and scholarly exchange in Turkey. With wonderful operating facilities in Ankara and Istanbul, ARIT has assisted thousands of American and Turkish scholars, focusing not only on Turkish history and archaeology but on contemporary Turkey as well. ARIT also strives to promote more general U.S.-Turkish cooperation and understanding in a variety of ways reaching out to the broader general publics in both countries, including working with the American Turkish Council.

Our College and University Affiliations program has supported a number of linkages between U.S. and Turkish universities promoting important faculty

and curriculum development efforts -- Columbia University and the University of Istanbul in law; Georgetown University and the University of Ankara in social sciences; Ohio State University and the University of Istanbul in business; Southern Illinois University and the University of Cukurova in English and linguistics; the University of Minnesota and Bogazici University in history and art and Duke University and Koc University in public policy. These types of affiliations, whether federally funded or not, are most important in developing programs based on the prescribed needs and interests of the particular partnering institutions. Other partnerships -- between Bilkent, METU, Bogazici, Koc and Marmara Universities with U.S. colleges and universities -- often include study abroad opportunities for American collegians.

We have now completed the initial discussions aimed at helping support a groundbreaking joint program between the State University System of New York with the Turkish Higher Education Council, or YOK. This partnership would establish linkages between individual SUNY campuses and YOK campuses across New York State and Turkey. Wide-ranging exchange programs between the respective individual academic institutions would be supported as would joint academic programs, including certificate and degree programs in such fields as business and information science. The partnership would focus as well on the topic of distance education, looking at how SUNY's 64-campus Learning Network may provide YOK with ideas for enhancing its on-line course offerings throughout the Turkish higher education system. In addition, YOK seeks guidance from SUNY in enacting a number of systemic educational reforms, including devolving overall fiscal and managerial responsibilities from YOK to the respective Turkish higher education institutions. Concurrently, these individual Turkish institutions are being encouraged to develop more meaningful relationships with the communities within which they work -- a trademark of SUNY's network of community colleges.

U.S. community colleges and the American community college model -- a uniquely American invention now 100 years old -- deserve special mention, knowing of Turkey's interest in this area. Currently there are 1,200 community colleges in the United States, at least one in every congressional district. As a group, they educate more than 6 million students, nearly half of the U.S. undergraduate student enrollment. Community colleges are the preferred entry point for huge numbers of America's minority students -- 46 per cent of all African-Americans; 55 per cent of all Hispanic-Americans, 40 per cent of all Asian-Americans, most Native Americans, and 58 per cent of all women. The average age of a community college student is twenty-nine. Nearly 20 per cent are over forty. Many are not your typical college student - they are taking classes to upgrade skills or to prepare for new careers -- all in the context of "lifelong learning," including programs designed to meet the needs of local business and industry. I am convinced that the American community college model holds huge potential for Turkey for an array of reasons, including developing an effective bridge between secondary and tertiary education for many of Turkey's students -- meeting the escalating demand for an education beyond high school, and looking at ways to meld courses of study between technical programs and more traditional academic pursuits. Twenty-five per cent of the American community college universe is actively engaged in international affairs, keenly aware that thinking globally means acting locally, given the plethora of ties that American communities now have with the world around them.

Nearly sixty up-and-coming mid-level managers from Turkey in all fields have spent an intensive year in the United States as Hubert Humphrey Fellows in tailored graduate-level academic training and professional

internship experiences. Many now occupy important positions in education, business and government, such as Sevil Atasoy, Director of Istanbul University's Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Science, Hulya Gunaydin, consultant to the President in the area of privatization, Beratiye Oncu, Deputy Executive Director of the Export Promotion Center, in the Ministry of the Treasury and Foreign Trade, and Filiz Erol, a leader in the Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration.

Turkey now leads the European continent in the number of foreign students studying in the United States -- 15,000 annually, and the number is increasing. While certainly benefiting these students, it is also a most valuable means of exposing American students to their Turkish counterparts, thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding first-hand. I daresay that this remains a real issue for America, as too many of us remain unaware of the rich cultural heritage of other countries. In 1960, 16 per cent of all American undergraduate students studied a foreign language -- today that number is 8 per cent. More than a half million foreign students are currently studying in the United States. While the number of American students studying abroad is increasing, it is only 130,000. How do we address this imbalance? No doubt, we could take a lesson by looking at the attitudes and interests of Turkish students, with their more natural affinity to seek and appreciate international dimensions. These opportunities for Turkish students in the United States also help address Turkey's challenge of trying to meet the needs of the burgeoning number of Turkish students seeking a higher education. An important part of this foreign student process is the excellent work of the Fulbright Commission offices in Ankara and Istanbul, which advise annually, approximately 30,000 Turkish students interested in studying in America.

Let me mention one other example of educational partnership we have supported. The Center for the Study of Federalism at Temple University, in cooperation with the Center for the Study of Local Government at Celal Bayar University, recently conducted a two-phase project to promote Turkish democracy and regional cooperation. The project brought ten local government officials from the Southeastern Anatolia Development Project Area to the United States for a two-and-a-half week workshop and study tour to Washington, DC; Denver; Columbus, Ohio; New Orleans and Philadelphia. The participants met with local mayors, discussed local economic development projects and saw first-hand examples of regional cooperation and development in America. The second phase of the project consisted of two conferences in Turkey, one in Manisa and the other in Adana. The conferences included case studies presented by American participants on regional cooperation projects in the United States.

All these examples portray our role as catalyst and broker, in promoting and supporting educational ties between the United States and Turkey -- general and specific -- long-term and short-term -- for individuals, for institutions and for organizations. While we, in many ways, are leading this bilateral effort, we are certainly not the only federal department or agency assisting U.S.-Turkish educational endeavors. More than twenty other departments and agencies support such activities in a wide variety of ways. Let me mention just a few, which may be familiar to you.

- The Department of Agriculture provides short-term training for Turkish agriculturalists from the public and private sectors, concerned with trade, management, marketing and technology transfer.

- The Fund for U.S. Artists, administered by the National Endowment of

the Arts, assists American artists to present at festivals and exhibitions in Turkey.

- The Department of Education, through its foreign language and world areas studies programs, assists U.S. higher education institutions to maintain expertise in teaching, research and materials development about Turkey, including all aspects of its history and culture and language.

- And as discussed during lunch today, by Professor Namik Kemal Pak, under an agreement between the TUBITAK, Turkey's national science organization, and the U.S. National Science Foundation, support is provided for collaborative research, joint seminars and workshops between American and Turkish physical scientists, engineers, computer scientists, and social and environmental scientists.

In closing, I am delighted about the variety of activities currently taking place to foster educational interaction between our two countries. Our federal efforts are paralleled by many cooperative activities carried out through the private sector. All of these endeavors serve to deepen and strengthen the social, cultural and educational bonds between Turkey and the United States. I strongly encourage all of us to continue on this important path. Thank you very much. **Türkiye'de görüşmek üzere!**

