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TURKEY AND NATO

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO
THE RT. HON. THE LORD CARRINGTON

AT

THE UNIVERSITY OF ISTANBUL
TURKEY

TUESDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER 1987

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I see that I am supposed to be talking about continuity and change in NATO. But I spoke only yesterday on general Alliance themes to the Atlantic Treaty Association who are also meeting in this great city of yours this week. I therefore propose today, with your permission, to concentrate on the rather more specific question of Turkey and the Alliance. Knowing, as I do, the reputation of this fine University for learning, in the broadest sense, I trust you will forgive me if I appear a little too parochial in this respect.

I hope my own credentials for tackling the subject are sufficient. Looking back over my programme of visits as NATO Secretary General, I found that November is always my Turkish month. I spoke in this country almost exactly two years ago and it was a year ago to the day that I addressed the North Atlantic Assembly here in Istanbul.

You may feel that one visit each year is not enough. I fully agree. But I console myself with the thought that throughout history, when your city had the unique distinction of being the capital of two great empires, Byzantine and Ottoman, members of the civilized world thought themselves lucky if they reached the Bosphorus once in a lifetime - as of course do modern tourists today.

But it is still a great distance from Eastern Turkey say, to California or to the Arctic Circle - to take the other geographical extremes of our Treaty Area. And despite the homogenising effects of the modern world, the economic, cultural and political differences between the peoples of sixteen independent NATO nations remain considerable. Indeed, in some senses differences with our neighbours can be greater than with our Allies further away. Given these variations it is therefore not surprising that we should need to ask ourselves from time to time what it is that binds us together in this remarkable common enterprise called NATO.

Any serious analysis of this sort of question has to avoid being blurred by feelings and emotion. We may like each other as people - which is certainly the case between my own British countrymen and the Turks - but Alliances cannot go on based on mere friendship and good nature, however deep that affection may be. Nor would they work on the basis of outdated concepts. If on the one hand, the richer NATO members saw themselves as latter day administrators of some Marshall Plan or if on the other hand Turkey still felt too weak to stand firmly on her own two feet, NATO couldn't survive and indeed it shouldn't. Treaties are only durable so long as they are in harmony with the basic and tangible interests of the participants.

For the last 35 years of Turkish membership these mutual interests have not really been in doubt. It would be presumptuous of me to describe your own perspective. But some points are clear. The need for strong collective arrangements to safeguard your security was made obvious when you were faced after World War II with several years of Soviet demands to give up three Turkish provinces and cede control of the Bosphorus. Subsequently the military situation has become more stable. But it is never comfortable to live next door to a superpower with a hostile ideology and in a region of numerous international uncertainties. The military need to guarantee your security through continuing membership of the Alliance has rarely, if ever, been seriously contested. However, Turkey's membership in NATO has also had a wider political significance. The democratic and Western orientation of your country which began with the founding of the Republic in 1923, has to a large extent been carried forward by your NATO membership. It can be argued that it was this, more than anything else, which facilitated your establishment as a European power, even if that process is not yet fully completed.

From the NATO perspective, the arguments for Turkish membership are simple. Turkish stability and independence has always been a vital Western interest. Your geo-strategic position in the East-West context; your rôle as a bulwark in a region of dangerous upheaval; your massive land army in the front line defence of the West; the rôle of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles in any major conflict - all these have a continuing relevance and importance in Alliance thinking today.

But of course, there is no room for complacency. Times change and with them the need for general principles in current circumstances. And much has indeed changed in recent years. To take arms control alone, when I first spoke in Turkey, at Ankara University two years ago, the United States and Soviet Union had just started talking to each other again. By the time I was here last year, President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev had already met twice and made progress towards an agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces and opened discussions on cuts in strategic weapons. Today we are approaching the third superpower summit and the signing of the first agreement in the history of arms control which will actually reduce the number of nuclear weapons. East and West are negotiating over a wider range of issues than ever before.

It may be easy to assume that such negotiations and agreements will affect only the military balance, mainly in central Europe and well away from the Southern Region. But there is a much wider relevance than that.

Take for example the new impetus for negotiating on conventional forces. Talks on these used to be confined to central Europe alone, not with great success. Now the Alliance is making proposals to extend the area of conventional stability talks beyond central Europe to the whole of the Western area, including the Southern Region. In other words we hope that it will become possible to discuss such threats as the Soviet concentration of tanks and manpower in your area, as well as elsewhere, with a view to eliminating disparities and reducing capabilities for surprise attack or large scale offensive operations against us. Turkey is playing an active and constructive role as part of this work. The recent visit involving Turkey in so-called on-site inspections of military exercises is another aspect of this process.

Let me illustrate the point more generally. Arms control is a valuable element in East-West relations. But the ultimate purpose is served only when it contributes to addressing the basic reasons for the military build-up, and these are political. It is therefore also important, in the wider context of NATO's rôle, to intensify our efforts to break down barriers in other fields. I am thinking in particular of the so-called human dimension in East-West relations and the need to build greater trust and understanding between States. Already there is some progress in, for example, the numbers of exit visas granted by the Soviet Union and some Eastern European countries. The jamming of some Western radio stations has stopped. A number of dissidents have been released. Western policy is to build on this in the so-called CSCE process in Vienna and to translate the progress which is being made in some countries into firm and permanent commitments covering all European states. There is therefore a relevance to your own particular problems over human rights issues with your Warsaw Pact neighbour to the north-west of here.

In short, NATO's approach to the opportunities provided by the new climate in relations is to ensure that the benefits are not limited to one particular part of the Alliance but are shared throughout the Treaty area. There is a real link between what can be achieved on reducing INF weapons stationed well away from this part of the world and progress in specific issues of more immediate regional concern.

From what I have said already, it is, I hope, evident that NATO is not just a military Organisation. And the picture is changing, particularly with a more dynamic Soviet leadership. But the maintenance of military capabilities must remain fundamental to the purpose of the Alliance. These are needed to provide adequate deterrence and defence in the light of the undiminished military machine of the Warsaw Pact - and we have to

worry about capabilities, not just intentions, however peace-loving Mr. Gorbachev may appear or wish to be. Keeping up our military guard is also imperative if the wider political objectives of arms reductions and improved East-West relations I have described are to be achieved. This may seem paradoxical, but our experiences over the INF negotiations have shown us it is only by preserving military strength and political cohesion that we can bring the Soviet Union to the negotiating table. Unilateral disarmament is easy - we could easily have withdrawn our cruise and Pershing missiles. But it is only the harder process of multilateral disarmament which is worth having. By staying firm we have the prospect not just of eliminating cruise and Pershing, but of ridding the world of the much more numerous and threatening Soviet SS-20s and others.

I should like to say a few words about the military aspects of NATO's strategy because these are not always fully understood and misunderstandings about its value and purpose can easily arise. First, it is important to remember that NATO is an entirely defensive Alliance; it will never fire the first shot. Our purpose is peace. Nor is it our objective to engage in an arms build-up or to match the Warsaw Pact man for man, weapon for weapon. The aim of our flexible response strategy is to maintain the minimum range of forces, conventional, theatre nuclear and strategic which together deter any act of aggression.

Secondly, we are a partnership of democratic equals, not a mirror image of the Warsaw Pact where one superpower dominates a group of dependent subordinates. Although countries contribute in different ways according to their ability, the result is a truly collective enterprise. We proceed by consensus. It is possible for any one NATO member to veto decisions and the only way others can change that is by persuasion and discussion. This can make us seem slow, can be infuriating when one country blocks what others want to do, but it is never coercive or undemocratic.

But thirdly, when it comes to the defence guarantee, matters are much more clear cut. The wording of the NATO Charter, that an attack on any one country is regarded by the Alliance as an attack on all, means exactly what it says. I cannot conceive of a situation where, for example, Soviet tanks were to actively threaten Eastern Anatolia and the rest of the Alliance would fail to come to your aid. Over the past 40 years, an interdependence has built up which is unparalleled in the history of Alliances. The integrated military structure of which your country is a part, the regular day-to-day planning and exercising in which Turkey participates fully - these serve to lock all countries into the same structure, however geographically distant they may otherwise feel. Moreover, Alliance troops stationed on your territory are not there as some infringement of national sovereignty or as an imposition.

They, together with the troops which would come to your aid as reinforcements in any emergency, are flesh and blood evidence of this alliance commitment. In this way, your territory is regarded as the front line of the West, just as other frontiers are such as central Germany. As a politician myself of some 40 years standing, I am entirely convinced that the NATO guarantee applies throughout the NATO area, irrespective of which political party might be in power in any one country. And whenever the international situation has deteriorated, that sense of solidarity has become stronger.

So, the benefits of the NATO deterrent are shared evenly; they are undoubtedly available to Turkey. But similarly, each country has to take its share of the responsibilities of maintaining their part of the defence effort. Now, no-one can doubt the quality of the Turkish contribution. The facilities, common defence installations and communications made available to your Allies have a high value. The Turkish armed forces, the largest in NATO Europe, are unquestionably among the finest in the world. Their motivation and commitment is outstanding and all of us in NATO owe a debt of gratitude to them. Turkey also contributes to the theatre nuclear element of NATO. It is important that these forces too, should be maintained and kept effective as part of the programme of work under consideration in the Alliance. Because it is these theatre nuclear forces - shorter-range missiles, artillery and dual-capable aircraft - which provide a vital link to the strategic nuclear deterrent which itself is the ultimate safeguard of the security of all our countries.

Now I appreciate that there is sometimes a feeling in this country that Turkey already gives more to the Alliance than it gets in return. Turkey is not unique in this respect. These burdensharing questions are immensely difficult for all of us. But everyone would agree on the simple proposition that you have particular problems here. It will be very difficult for Turkey to achieve the required modernization of her forces without continued and, if possible, increased military assistance from her allies. Two of your allies, the United States and Germany, provide substantial amounts of assistance on a regular basis within well established programmes. But we need to do more, particularly in exploring new ways of helping. It is not a matter of aid. It is a question of fulfilling NATO missions and enhancing the security of the alliance as a whole. Moreover as Prime Minister Ozal has said in a related context, "Turkey needs trade, not aid". In the military sense this means helping you also to develop your own armaments industries and meet more of your requirements domestically, thereby reducing the cost of equipment purchases. The F-16 programme is an obvious case in point. I do not pretend that progress is fast, but I do assure you that this is an issue to which the NATO Council is attaching

priority, in the context of assistance to the Southern Region generally and I am currently making new proposals on armaments planning which, if agreed, will also help.

There are also other, less well known ways in which the Alliance as distinct from individual countries is providing practical help. Let me mention one of them. Under the NATO Infrastructure Programme, Turkey receives back 25 times more than her infrastructure contributions. There is also in NATO a Science Programme designed to support the scientific and technological capabilities, particularly of the less wealthy NATO members. There are fellowships, equipment grants and other forms of co-operation. Turkey is the largest single beneficiary of the programme. Past achievements include pollution control in the Sea of Marmara and among new projects are improvement of lignite combustion, exploration of Black Sea fishing resources and development of a micro-electronic industry.

I have spoken so far about areas where interests obviously coincide. The cynical among you would say that given my job, I would do, wouldn't I? But before I finish, let me say a few words about developments which some observers here may feel call into question the relevance of the Alliance, or at least give rise to new security concerns.

We often hear of strains in transatlantic relations, in the cement which binds the American and European members of the Alliance together. There is nothing unique or unduly worrying in these. But at the same time there has been a revival of the Western European Union, of which Turkey along with a number of other European countries is not a member. This has prompted the feeling in some quarters that the Alliance structure is weakening and that an exclusive group of Europeans are about to create their own security arrangements to the detriment of countries like Turkey.

In fact I believe that the WEU can be a help to the Alliance rather than a danger. There are perhaps three criteria which need to be met. The first is obvious: that it should do some practical good - there is no value in a forum for its own sake. Secondly, its activities must be transparent, that is to say that non-WEU NATO members should be fully informed of what is going on. Thirdly, and of most importance, its activities should be complementary, in other words designed to strengthen the European input for the benefit of the Alliance as a whole.

Though still in its early days, it is already clear that the WEU is moving along the right lines. In particular the so-called European Security Platform which it has just produced is a reaffirmation of basic Alliance principles to which I suspect that all NATO members, including the United States, could

probably subscribe. This does not of course fully meet the concerns of all NATO countries. But there are other fora moving on similar lines, such as the Eurogroup and Independent European Programme Group. Whatever the structures, I have no doubts that the objective of all these, far from weakening the transatlantic relationship, will be to strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance and, equally, Turkey will have its place in the process.

You will note that I have managed so far to avoid the other question of Turkish relations with Greece. This is because although NATO is deeply concerned about the problem and the effect it has on the cohesion of the Southern Region, a solution can come only as a result of a political decision by both Allies to settle or manage their differences. NATO itself cannot choose between two Allies or impose a settlement. But of course, that reality does not change all the other reasons why, in the wider context of Turkish interests, active and full participation in the Alliance makes sense.

In this rather discursive review, I have outlined some of the reasons why I believe that the interests and policies which have kept Turkey and NATO together for the last 35 years remain just as valid as they ever were. There is much to be done on both sides. But NATO, like Turkey herself, is an evolving organization, not a static one. But at the end of the day, any assessment of the value of the Alliance must go beyond the military considerations of armaments or arms control, or questions of resources and finance, very important though all of these are, and reach to the political heart of the matter. By its very purpose and its method of operation, NATO is not just a military machine, it stands to uphold the basic freedoms and democratic principles in the West.

From your own recent history, you know as well as any nation that it is only by constant vigilance and effort that such principles can be safeguarded. We are both in pretty good shape to go forward together.