

Turkey National Day

Strategic partnership reaching new levels

BULENT MERIC
AMBASSADOR OF TURKEY



It is a great pleasure for me to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the 94th Anniversary of the Republic of Turkey. I would like to take this opportunity to present my warmest

greetings to our Japanese friends and my congratulations to the Turkish community in Japan.

The Turkish nation, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, gained victory in its struggle for ending the foreign occupation after World War I and proclaimed the Republic on Oct. 29, 1923. After more than nine decades, Turkey stands as an embodiment of her founding father Ataturk's ideals and vision of a constitutional democracy, a rapidly developing member of the global com-

munity and a dynamic, growing, free market economy driven by a young and creative new generation.

Turkish foreign policy is based on the Ataturk's principle of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World." In our contemporary society, security in indivisible and lasting peace can only be attained by value-based and cooperative efforts. Turkey is a security-providing country. It takes a leading position in addressing the humanitarian crises in our region and beyond. Turkey not only provides a safe haven for more than 3 million asylum seekers but also reaches out as far as to Somalia, the Dominican Republic and Myanmar.

Political stability engenders peace, stability and economic development. This year the Turkish people confirmed their preference for political stability in a referendum to change the constitution along the lines of a presidential system. We believe that this move will take us forward along the path of the "2023 Vision," which envisages Turkey becoming a country of peace and prosperity with a population of 80 million people, \$2

trillion gross domestic product and \$25,000 per capita income. An average annual growth rate of 5 percent in the last decade has contributed significantly to achieving these objectives. Turkey has kept this momentum with a growth rate of 5 percent recorded in the first two quarters in 2017 and we forecast that similar trends will continue during the rest of the year.

In the last five decades, Japan has been our development partner. Our relations are based on a special friendship. The origins of our friendship go back to the 19th century. The tragic episode of the Imperial Ottoman frigate Ertugrul that sank off the coast of Kushimoto in Wakayama Prefecture in 1890 due to a typhoon was the starting point in this regard. The sacrifices of the then-poor people of Kushimoto for the disaster-wrecked sailors are well engraved in the Turkish heart. The culture of cooperation rapidly progressed since then, through the evacuation of Japanese nationals from Iran in 1985, during the Iran-Iraq War and the ensuing natural disasters that occurred in

our countries. The movie "Kainan 1890" brilliantly sums up and passes this philosophy of togetherness on to the new generation.

In the 93rd year of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries are strategic partners that take common positions on almost all international problems. Economic cooperation is the most prominent area of our strategic partnership. In particular, the Sinop Nuclear Power Plant and Turkey-Japan Science and Technology University projects stand today as flagships of our partnership. The timely realization of these two projects will certainly bring our cooperation to a new level.

Turkey is one of the leading tourism destinations in the world. With its rich historical legacy, beautiful coastline, stunning scenery, exquisite cuisine, exciting events and cultural festivals, it attracts millions of tourists from all over the world. Turkey offers a captivating blend of antiquity and contemporary and of East and West in all aspects. Turkish cuisine is essentially the continuation of the Ottoman cuisine, which in turn made an excellent



Istanbul offers a blend of traditional and modern elements. EMBASSY OF TURKEY

synthesis of Central Asian, Caucasian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines. Turkish cuisine varies across the country and offers different specialties and tastes according to region. We encourage our Japanese friends to visit Turkey and experience its vast richness.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the government of Japan, The Japan-Turkey Society, the Tokyo Japanese-

Turkish Women's Club and friendship societies all over Japan for their contribution to the impeccable cooperation between the two countries. Our thanks also go to The Japan Times, whose generous support we have always received.

With these thoughts in mind, I would like to extend, once again to the readers of The Japan Times, our most heartfelt greetings.



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 the Proclamation
 of
 the Republic of Turkey



JAPAN TOBACCO INC.
 JT Bldg., 2-1, Toranomon 2-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8422, JAPAN
 Phone: (03) 3582-3111 Fax: (03) 5572-1463 URL: <http://www.jt.com>

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The Japan-Turkey Society
 President: Hiroshi Sawada

c/o ITOCHU Building
 5-1, Kita-Aoyama 2-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0061

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