

*The speech that Ersin Arioglu
gave on June 19, 2002 at his residence
in honor of Akio Wada the Consul General of Japan
Istanbul/Turkey*

*The Honorable Consul General and Mrs. Wada,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Friends,*

I feel privileged, so does my wife Ülkü, and my family members to have you at our home and host this dinner in your honor, Consul General of Japan and Mrs. Akio WADA.

Equally and warmly; I welcome our distinguished Japanese guests around the table. We are very pleased to have the esteemed presence of Obayashi representative Sasaki-san, and Itochu representative Kawasaki-san. To my compatriots, many thanks for joining us in this evening of friendship.

Dear Akio san;

We all know, from ancient times, we are distant relatives. Our languages, various traditions, strong family ties, historical and geological quakes and **bunka** (kültür) still bear the traces of this unique kinship. This has all the ingredients of a relationship from people to people; from nation to nation. This explains, partly why, unlike the others, Turkey's relations with Japan are totally free of any distressing issues. I am confident, we can keep this unique past lively; not only today but well into the future.

Distinguished Guests,

Since the 1990's a new political and economic geography is shaping. Eurasia is central to this change. This breath-taking transformation offers innumerable prospects to both Japan and Turkey. Japan, with its huge economy, is to the immediate east of this area while Turkey; with its young and dynamic generation, occupies a **pivotal** location in this **vast** region. We together have the potential and the capacity, to build on this fertile ground.

At this initial stage of the 21st Century, promising many challenges but many opportunities also; a forward looking, comprehensive vision is what we need in Japan - Turkey relations. To me, the following appear to be decisive, while there are other sectors which we could cultivate as well.

- * Trade is fine, it is growing; while we need much more of it, let us look beyond this traditional exchange.
- * Turkey must transform itself from a technology consuming to technology producing country. This is urgent and unavoidable for us. Japan has outstanding capacity in this respect.
- * Turkey must absorb, with its young generation, computer science and technology; develop into an information society. Japan and Turkey need such qualified generations to compete USA and European - Union more effectively.
- * Execution of major projects, both in Turkey and Eurasia, as well as Middle-East, North-Africa and Eastern Europe, is of great importance. The sector of construction is the engine in this frame. We deeply value the quality of the Japanese advance engineering.
- * Turkey's natural resources offer wide range agro-businesses and fisheries.
- * Turkey's tourism potential is second to none in Europe. It offers numerous possibilities.

The Honorable Consul General,

As a humble engineer, this is my concept of the brief theater of cooperation and mutual support between Japan and Turkey.

Dear Guests,

I would like to conclude my words with two anecdotes, which I find meaningful; for this night.

A Western traveller and a Far-eastern person. Meet each other at an international airport. Western asks: **"Are you Chinese Mr.?"** A short answer, **"No"**. **"Oh! May be Korean?"** Answer again is short, **"No"**. Western still tries to discover. **"You could be Malesian"**. Answer comes loud, sharp and proudly **"No, I am Japan"** To me, this is the secret of the long-run Japanese miracle. Japanese identify themselves, with the nation and the state. They feel totally committed to them. That is Japan.

Here is the second anecdote: An American and Turkish traveler met each other on an airplane, sitting side by side on the way from Washington to San Francisco. The American asks his neighbour, **"Where are you from?"**. Answer: **"From Turkey"**. The American asks **"Where is it?"** Answer is sharp: **"In my heart"**. This answer, may be an explanation for many Turkish short-run outstanding achievements; very often realized when the knife touches the bone. Turks feel, think and work with their hearts. That is Turkey.

Honorable Guests,

In conclusion, I strongly believe, a closer and more active bilateral cooperation and strategic partnership between Japan and Turkey would be a very rewarding synergy and a very important contribution to civilization, peace and security in Asia and beyond. We should always work for these objectives.

With this spirit and feelings, I would like to invite you all; to raise a toast to Japan-Turkey successful collaboration; to you, Honorable Consul General of Japan and Mrs. Wada and to all our distinguished guests here. **“Kampai”** and **“Serefe”** .

DOMO ARIGATO GOZAYMASTA.

Ersin ARIOGLU

Haziran, 2002/ Çamlıca