

**Turkey and South Africa:
The Development of Relations,
1860–2005**

Tom Wheeler

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Introduction

The relationship between South Africa and Turkey will take a major step forward when the prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, makes his planned visit to South Africa, commencing on 2 March 2005.

This visit is at the highest level to date by a Turkish leader and reciprocates the visit paid to Turkey by Deputy President Jacob Zuma in October 2003, which itself represented a major advance in the political relationship between the two countries.

It is to be hoped that Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit cements these new relations between the two countries and that the issues described in this publication, which have long dogged the relationship, can finally be laid to rest.

Turkey and South Africa, countries at similar stages of development, with dynamic economies, with similar problems, and both undergoing rapid change, have much to offer each other. The visit creates the opportunity for the leaders of the two countries to place their political seal of approval on the relationship, to highlight

¹ TOM WHEELER, Chief Operating Officer of SAIIA, was the third South African Ambassador to Turkey and served in Ankara between June 1997 and July 2001. The report is partly based on a personal memoir.

opportunities for the local business community, and to discuss the way forward.

Comparative Statistics: South Africa and Turkey

The following statistics demonstrate some of the relative similarities of South Africa and Turkey:²

Table 1: South Africa and Turkey: Comparative statistics		
	<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Turkey</i>
Population (estimate)	46.6 million	68.8 million
Population growth	1.7%	1.6%
Country size	1,228,000 sq km	779,452 sq km
GDP growth	4.7%	4%
GNP	\$159,896 million (position 29)	\$221,579 (position 21)
GNI per person ³	\$2,780 (position 93)	\$2,790 (position 92)
CPI	3.4%	9.3%
Imports	\$54 billion	\$97 billion
Exports	\$52 billion	\$63 billion
Current account balance (2003 estimate)	-\$1.234 billion	-\$6.806 billion
External debt	\$39 billion	\$68 billion
Total debt	\$90 billion	\$236 billion

South Africa and Turkey share another similar characteristic: a highly modern technological economy side by side with a deeply rural, underdeveloped sector. In Turkey, the divide is a line running roughly north-south to the east of the capital, Ankara, but the underdeveloped sector also includes migrants from rural poverty to the periphery of major cities in the west of the country — a situation reminiscent of South Africa’s industrial centres.

² The figures are for 2004, unless otherwise indicated. They come from various sources, including the Trade Section, SA Embassy, Ankara.

³ <http://www.worldbank.org/data/datatopic/GNIPC.pdf>.

Diplomatic representation

Early history

Formal diplomatic relations between South Africa and Turkey date from 12 October 1992,⁴ when an exchange of notes between the two governments was signed in Ankara. The South African Embassy was opened in Ankara and the Turkish Embassy was opened in Pretoria in 1993. However, the relationship, at a variety of levels, predates this by as much as 130 years.

The earliest known contact was the appointment of PE de Roubaix as honorary consul-general of the Ottoman Empire in Cape Town on 18 February 1861.⁵ Because of conflict among the congregation at the Palm Mosque in Long Street, Cape Town, De Roubaix appealed for assistance, through the British Crown, to the Ottoman Sultan, Abdulaziz, who was also the Caliph of Islam. On 3 September 1862, the Sultan appointed Ebubekir Effendi (also rendered as Abu Bakr Effendi) to travel to the Cape of Good Hope to teach Islam to the Cape Muslim population.⁶

⁴ List of agreements, attached, supplied by Treaty Section, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

⁵ Letter dated 7 September 2004 from the Turkish ambassador, HE Ferhat Ataman, to the author.

⁶ *Ibid.*; Worden N, Van Heyningen E & V Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town, The Making of a City*. Cape Town: David Philip, 1998, p.187 refers to Davids A, *The Mosques of the Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape*. Cape Town: The South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980 and Haron M, *Muslims in South Africa: An Annotated Bibliography*. Cape Town, South African Library, 1997, which contain numerous entries referring to Abu Bakr. Worden et al. note that the replacement of the traditional Malay conical hat with the red fez worn at that time in the Ottoman Empire (but banned in 1922 when the Republic was established), and still occasionally seen in Cape Town, traces its origin to Abu Bakr's influence. The same is said to be the origin of the diaphanous headscarves worn by some Cape Malay women.

Abu Bakr (effendi is a title, often mistaken in South Africa for a surname, which is used to this day by his descendants in Cape Town) arrived in Cape Town on 13 January 1863. He set up a religious school (*medressa*) and wrote religious books on Islam in Afrikaans, but using Arabic script — reputedly the first printed text in the Afrikaans language⁷. He later established the mosque at the corner of Long and Dorp Streets.

A series of honorary consuls was appointed in Cape Town after Roubaix. Louis Goldman was appointed by the Sultan in 1870, followed by Filori Melburg in 1898, Ivi Amaboyai in 1902 and, in 1911, by Lord Vedding Viz, former head of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce.⁸ The Cape Almanac lists JM Hoets as Turkish vice consul in Simonstown.⁹

In 1888, a Turkish Consulate was opened in Johannesburg. Major Henri Bettelheim, a diamond dealer, was granted an exequatur by the government of the South African Republic, but this was withdrawn on 3 January 1896, when it emerged that Bettelheim was a member of the Reform Committee, which inspired the Jameson Raid.¹⁰

⁷ Van Selms A, 'The manuscript and its author', 2 December 1956, in Brandel-Syrier M, *The Religious Duties of Islam as Taught and Explained by Abu Bakr Effendi*, 2nd ed. Leiden: EJ Brill, 1960, quotes the whimsical story related by his son of the arrival in South Africa of Abu Bakr, a Kurdish religious scholar from what is now Iraq and subsequently Erzerum in eastern Turkey. Van Selms goes on to note that Abu Bakr's elder son, Ahmed Atta'ullah Effendi, was appointed director of the Ottoman School in Kimberley in 1884. He notes further that in 1956, grandchildren of Abu Bakr were still living in Cape Town using the surname Atala.

⁸ Ataman F, *op. cit.*, 2004,

⁹ Information supplied by JSF Botha in an e-mail dated 17 January 2005.

¹⁰ Letter from the Acting Secretary of State of the ZAR to H Bettelheim, Transvaal Archive Depot, ref. (SSA vo. 296 verw. RA3586/95); and Rood L, 'Lawyers of the Jameson Raid', *De Rebus*, January 1996, both kindly provided by Adv. PA Stemmet of the DFA.

Subsequently the affairs of the Turkish Consulate were handled by the German Consulate. The first Turkish diplomat stationed in South Africa was Remzi Bey, who was appointed on 21 April 1914 and passed away on 14 February 1916. He is buried in Enoch Sontonga Park cemetery in Braamfontein.¹¹

The Treaty of Lausanne

Turkey has an unusual place in the history of South African international relations. The *History of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, 1927–1993*¹² records an incident affecting Turkey that represented the first time the prime minister of South Africa took a decision on foreign relations that was at odds with the wishes of the Imperial Government in London.

Turkey entered the First World War on the side of Germany. After the Allied victory in 1918, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed between the major Allied powers and the defeated Ottoman Empire (in parallel with the Treaty of Versailles with Germany). Allied troops — French, Italian and Greek — occupied various sections of Turkey, with the British being responsible for the Neutral Zone including Istanbul and the Straits — the Dardenelles and the Bosphorus — which comprise the link between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

A War of Independence had been launched from Eastern Turkey by Mustafa Kemal (later awarded the surname Atatürk, ‘Father of the Turks’) in response to conditions imposed on Turkey in the Treaty of Sèvres. The treaty threatened to divide Anatolia, the great bulk of Turkish territory in Asia, into two ethnic states, Armenia and

¹¹ Ataman F, *op. cit.*

¹² *History of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, 1927–1993*. Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2005, Chapter 6.

Kurdistan, with additional land to be handed over to Italy, Greece and France, with Britain controlling the Neutral Zone.

The *History of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs* describes the events as follows:¹³

Although South Africa enjoyed international status after the First World War as a signatory of the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and as a member of the League of Nations, the question of its sovereignty was still unresolved. The Dominions were part of the British Empire, whose basis was defined by the 1921 Empire Conference as a 'united understanding and common action in foreign policy'. Hardly a year later, in September 1922, this solidarity was put to its first test when Turkey tried to drive the Greeks out of Asia Minor. France and Italy withdrew their troops from Chanak, the narrowest strait of the Dardenelles, leaving Britain which was responsible for the area to act alone as guarantor of the Treaty of Sèvres. Britain asked the Dominions for reinforcements, but Smuts, on behalf of South Africa, and Canada were not prepared to comply without parliamentary sanction.

An armistice was declared before any concrete decisions had to be taken, but when France opposed the presence of the Dominions at the Lausanne Conference that was convened to negotiate an agreement to replace the now defunct Treaty of Sèvres and determine Turkey's borders, Britain yielded. It signed the Treaty on behalf of the Dominions, bringing them face to face with a possible conflict of foreign policy interests. In the event, the Smuts government ratified the treaty.

South Africa not only failed to support Britain with an undertaking to send troops but also, as a party to the Treaty of Lausanne, subsequently became a guarantor of the sovereignty and borders of Atatürk's Turkish Republic. As far as is known, South Africa played no further role in this regard. This may in part be because, unlike Australians, New Zealanders and Newfoundlanders (later

¹³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 6. A British perspective of these events is contained in Fromkin D, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. [New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1989], pp.548–52.

Canadians), no troops participated under the South African flag during the Gallipoli invasion of 1915.¹⁴

Changes in the 1980s and 1990s

There is little of substance in South African–Turkish relations between 1922 and the late 1980s. Occasional references to the Turkish attitude to issues of importance to South Africa at the United Nations occur in the *History of the Department of Foreign Affairs*. South Africa briefly had a common interest in the defence of the Middle East after the Second World War, but its point of contact was with the United Kingdom. During the Cold War, South Africa shared the West’s opposition to communism, as did Turkey, but this had no impact on relations between the two countries nor did it lead to the establishment of direct relations between them.¹⁵

In a forthcoming autobiography, a retired South African diplomat, PJ Wolvaardt, describes an incident that is perhaps typical of the limited extent of official contact:¹⁶

We dealt in London with all sorts of issues and a wide range of subjects, from the Law of the Sea Conference to the maintenance of South African war graves in far- flung places. We reported on events all over the world from a London perspective. We dealt with a number of countries which did not want much to do with us, but which from necessity occasionally had to have contact with us. I once had a long ‘exchange of notes,’ which is what this type of communications between embassies is called, with the Turkish Embassy in London about a South African girl who was raped by Turkish soldiers while

¹⁴ However, Van der Waag II, ‘South Africa and the war in Asia Minor, 1920–1923’, *Militaria*, 24, 1, 1994, pp.9–19, notes at p.14 that South Africans had served at the Dardenelles in the First World War, although presumably as members of other nations’ contingents.

¹⁵ History, *op. cit.* Chapter 17, p.385.

¹⁶ Wolvaardt PJ, *A Diplomat’s Story: Apartheid and Beyond, 1969 to 1998*. Alberton: Galago, 2005.

touring that country. I never thought I would be successful but after many months we were informed that the soldiers were arrested and sentenced to a lengthy term in prison.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of factors started to bring about a change that influenced the relationship between South Africa and Turkey.

The first was the election in 1983 of Turgut Ozal, an economic technocrat and pragmatist, as Turkish prime minister after the military coup of 1980. Ozal changed the nature of the Turkish economy from the statist model introduced in 1922 by Ataturk into a modern, entrepreneurial model, with a start being made on privatising the many state enterprises that had been used to launch the Turkish economy into the modern world. In these circumstances, South Africa became of interest as a potential trading partner.

Progress towards change in South Africa from 1989 onwards also made the development of relations possible.

First South African representation

In 1989, South Africa placed its first officials in Istanbul. An officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), DT de Wet, and an officer of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) operated from the premises of a private Turkish company, with no official recognition by the Turkish authorities, but with their knowledge. De Wet was known as managing director of the African Trade Centre. It was not a happy arrangement as the DTI official was involved in various dubious trading arrangements that could have caused embarrassment to both countries if they had become known. Nevertheless, the basis was laid for future activities by the identification of business people who already had links with South Africa and who could assist in developing relations between the two countries.

On 12 August 1991, after the visible process of political transformation in South Africa had commenced, the South African and Turkish authorities agreed to exchange consuls-general. Their offices were established in the respective countries' main commercial centres, Istanbul and Johannesburg. The first South African consul-general was CF (Neels) Jacobs, who had briefly been managing director of the African Trade Centre before assuming his new duties.¹⁷ His Turkish counterpart was Sami Onaran. A member of the DTI was stationed at the South African Consulate as consul (trade).

By 1992, South Africa's international position had improved to such an extent that Turkey and South Africa concluded an exchange of notes on 12 October agreeing to establish diplomatic relations. The South African Consulate-General remained open, while Consul-General Jacobs became South Africa's first ambassador in Ankara. The Turkish consul-general, Sami Onaran, also became his country's ambassador in Pretoria and the Consulate in Johannesburg was closed.¹⁸

The chancery of the South African Embassy was opened by Deputy Minister Renier Schoeman when he visited Ankara in June 1993. He had also officiated at the opening of the consular premises in Istanbul two years earlier.

By 1996, the DFA was seeking ways of cutting costs to enable it to meet the expenses involved in opening an increasing number of overseas missions. The axe fell on several consulates, including Istanbul and St Petersburg, which ceased to function from the end of that year, and the representative of the DTI was recalled from Turkey and not replaced. The wisdom of closing the consulate-general in Istanbul can be questioned, as the great bulk of trade and investment opportunities; the head offices of most national media,

¹⁷ Additional information provided by CF Jacobs.

¹⁸ A list of heads of mission is appended as Attachment 2.

corporations and financial institutions; and the main offices for Turkey of international financial institutions are situated in Istanbul. It is also a major port and the main port of entry or transit by air; this is where South African citizens most often need consular support and services.

The move may have eliminated potential or actual conflict or competition that often exists between embassies and subordinate consular missions and may have saved money in the longer term — but not the short term, because of the costs of closing a mission, paying termination benefits to local staff members, terminating rental contracts for office space and residential accommodation, and relocating transferred South African staff. The move, however, transposed new and heavy burdens, including trade and investment promotion, on the foreign affairs staff of the embassy, situated as it is 300 km from Istanbul in the interior of Anatolia.

When senior visitors come to or through Istanbul, arrangements for trade missions, such as that from the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industries in October 1998, have to be made and executed, and business visits paid to companies and media commentators. A four-hour drive by road or a flight from and to Ankara, with the attendant extra time and costs involved, is unavoidable for the ambassador and such support staff as may be needed.

The embassy staff complement was increased by the transfer of one first secretary from the defunct consulate in Istanbul. In addition, to handle the new and demanding trade promotion role, a post for a locally recruited trade secretary had to be created and filled.

Honorary consuls

It is important for South Africa to be represented in the principal cities of Turkey, yet it is financially unviable and not justified to place

career offices in each city. The solution lies in the appointment of local businesspeople of high standing in their communities as honorary consuls to represent South Africa. These individuals act as a first point of contact with the embassy if more specific assistance is needed.

South Africa's first honorary consul was Tamer Taşkin, a businessman in Izmir, Turkey's second industrial city, on the Aegean coast. By his interest in and enthusiasm for developing trade with South Africa and the regular trade delegations from the Aegean Chamber of Industry that he led to South Africa, he identified himself as a valuable and obvious candidate. He was appointed on 2 July 1992, and his status was raised to that of honorary consul-general on 7 July 2001 in recognition of his sustained contribution over a number of years.

After the career consulate in Istanbul was closed at the end of 1996, it was essential to appoint an honorary representative in that city. A number of candidates had been identified by June 1997 and after an intensive round of meetings with these individuals, it was decided to recommend Ishak Alaton, who, unlike the others, had had no previous connection of any sort with South Africa. He was a prominent Turkish businessman who was immensely proud of his Jewish roots in Spain at the time of the Inquisition, when the Turkish sultan offered a refuge to the Jews suffering persecution at the hands of the Catholic Church. A self-made businessman who had started his working life as an apprentice boilermaker in Sweden, he would have preferred to represent Sweden, he said, but as Sweden was already represented in Istanbul by a career consular mission, he found the idea of representing the new South Africa with all its historical similarities and current problems comparable to those of Turkey an intriguing prospect. From our point of view, he represented not only a man of great influence and integrity, a political commentator and independent thinker in his own country,

but also that rare individual who is both a captain of industry and a social democrat, a believer in reform and human rights.

The appointment was a happy choice for both sides. Ambassadorial colleagues in Ankara were openly amazed at and envious of our success in getting his agreement to the appointment.

In July 2001, approval was obtained from the authorities in Pretoria and Ankara to raise his status to that of consul-general, as befitted his role and his position in the community.

The third member of the team, who provided such valuable yet different support to the embassy, was Numan Olcar. As a travel agent in the southern port city of Mersin, he had handled the arrangements in 1992 for the South African naval vessel that called there for bunkers on its way to deliver South African humanitarian relief supplies from the Muslim community in South Africa to the Red Crescent in Turkey.¹⁹

The embassy had retained contact with him since, and he had been of invaluable assistance during visits by successive ambassadors to the Çukarova (formerly Cilicia) region and the cities of Adana and Mersin and beyond.

His appointment added a specialist in the tourism sector, a highly respected member of the executive of the Turkish Association of Travel Agents (TURSAB) who represented his industry in the southern and south-eastern region of Turkey, to the team. His excellent relationship with political, government and business leaders in his area was of inestimable value to the embassy.

Olcar took up his position formally on 20 January 1999.

¹⁹ <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/forrep/fort.htm#turk>.

Turkey likewise appointed an Honorary Consul in Cape Town, Mr GRW Babb, a former South African ambassador to Ottawa and Rome.²⁰

Political Issues

Given the physical distance between South Africa and Turkey, as well as the fact that the two countries belong to different international political and regional groupings, there would seem to be little of substantive importance in the political relationship between the two countries.

Turkey has been a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) since 1952 and a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the 'rich countries' club', since its inception in 1960. It has had an association agreement with the European community in its various manifestations since 1954 and a free trade agreement since 1995. In terms of the Kemalist principles articulated by Ataturk, it has pursued a 'Western vocation' for generations.

On the other hand, after South Africa's international isolation ended in 1994, it decided to align itself with the South — the developing world — and it joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Furthermore, attempts to build the relationship have been dogged by issues of a political nature from the start.

Mandela and the Ataturk Peace Prize

The first political element entered the relationship after the lifting of the ban on the African National Congress (ANC) and other organisations and the release of Nelson Mandela. As with the rest of

²⁰ <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/forrep/fort.htm#turk>.

the world, the Turks saw an opportunity to honour Mandela, and offered him their Atatürk Peace Prize.

The following sequence of events was explained by President Süleyman Demirel to the author, when he presented his credentials as the new South African ambassador in July 1997.

In 1991, Demirel, as Turkish prime minister at the time, attended the meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, and, while there, received a request from Nelson Mandela to pay a courtesy call. During their meeting, Mandela made some flattering comments about Atatürk, referring to him as a role model for the liberation struggle in South Africa. The idea immediately struck Demirel that Mandela should be awarded the Atatürk Peace Prize.

The matter was mishandled by the Turkish authorities in an unfortunate way, in that arrangements to award the prize were made and announced on the assumption that Mandela would accept and without consulting him in advance. The first word Mandela heard of the award was via the media. He declined, to the great consternation and indignation of Turks at all levels of society, who could not imagine that anyone would decline an honour that bore the name of the father of their nation.

In an interview in 1994 with Mithat Bereket, the first, and possibly the only, Turkish journalist to interview him, Mandela indicated that when the prize was offered to him, he was still the leader of a liberation movement, but that the situation had changed in that he was now the head of state and that different considerations and interests applied in 1994 than had in 1991. Possibly the friendship in capitals around the world between exiled ANC representatives and those of the PKK, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, may have played a role in Mandela's 1991 decision.

The Turkish authorities did not respond to the message conveyed in this TV interview, offended perhaps by what they interpreted as an affront from Mandela when their delegation was prevented from conveying their congratulations to the new head of state: the receiving line was terminated shortly before its turn to meet him.

Refusal to accept the prize became a *cause célèbre* in Turkey, a lead weight around the neck of any South African ambassador or dignitary visiting Turkey. Time after time, the issue was raised when meetings took place with chambers of commerce or at any public gathering addressed by a South African representative. It became an issue during the visit of Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad in June 2000. Ambassador Sobizana Mgqikana was also confronted with questions on the issue after he took up his duties in November 2001.

Turkish people seemed unable to grasp the subtle difference between being respectful to Ataturk, the father of their nation, and being critical of the contemporary political actions performed in the name of Ataturk by a government whose security officials were perceived by some abroad and in Turkey as not always scrupulous in the observance of recognised human rights — rights that were promoted as the basis of the ANC's struggle.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry were far more sanguine and dismissive of the issue at an earlier date, presumably realising that the initial error had been made by the Turkish side and feeling that it was time to move on.

In 1998, when South Africa appointed Ishak Alaton as its first honorary consul in Istanbul, he took it upon himself to attempt to find a solution to this problem. In preparation for his first visit to South Africa in July of that year, he requested an audience for himself and the ambassador with President Demirel. It is perhaps indicative of his standing and influence, and of Demirel's desire for a solution, that the request was granted within hours.

Demirel told them that the prize was 'over there in the cupboard waiting for Mandela to collect it'. During a meeting at Tuynhuys with Jakes Gerwel, then director-general of the presidency, Gerwel indicated to the delegation, which included Alaton, Necdet Çolpan, chairman of the Turkish–South African Business Council, TV journalist Mithat Bereket, the South African ambassador and J May, the DFA desk officer for Turkey, that the president had agreed to accept the prize and that a suitable opportunity should be found for the presentation.

It was soon apparent that officialdom in Pretoria did not share the delegation's enthusiasm for what they imagined they had achieved. There were apparently other factors that the delegation was not aware of. No suitable occasion could be found: not even a brief stop-over in Ankara when Mandela was crossing Turkish air space en route to Moscow — for which the embassy had to request approval. Nothing would work.

The issue came to a dead stop when the news was leaked to the Turkish daily, *Milliyet* in January 1999 that Mandela would now accept the prize. Once this information became public knowledge, pressure was brought — from where one can only speculate — and all further efforts in South Africa to move the matter forward were consistently rebuffed.

Alaton raised the issue with Deputy President Zuma when he received him for lunch in Istanbul in October 2003, but with Mandela's 'retirement after retirement', which he announced shortly thereafter, and the fact that Demirel, as initiator of the idea of honouring Mandela, had long since left public life, the time seemed to have come to drop the issue.

Arms sales and relations with the military in Turkey

In terms of the Turkish Constitution, the military plays a significant role in national life as the guardian of the principles of Atatürk. Until quite recently, it played a role in power plays unfamiliar in liberal democracies. By way of illustration, the minister of defence reports to the chief of the general staff, not the other way around. Technically, the chief of the general staff reports to the prime minister, but there have been those who have questioned whether that were indeed the reality. The State Security Council, with its equal military and cabinet membership chaired by the president, bore a striking resemblance, also in the level of power it wielded, to the organ of the same name during the Botha presidency in South Africa.²¹

Prior to 1994, the South African arms industry had a cosy relationship with the Turkish military and its defence procurement agencies. Meetings between South African arms manufacturers and Turkish military officers and officials responsible for procurement took place in the office of Ambassador Jacobs. A contract was signed for the maintenance of Turkish military helicopters and work was in progress. In addition, a contract estimated to be worth R500 million had been signed for the delivery of armaments to Turkey.

In one of his first actions on becoming South African minister of defence in 1994, Joe Modise summarily cancelled the contracts.

Possibly suspecting how matters were moving, the Turkish military procurement officials also started to lose interest in South Africa as a source of military materiel that would reduce dependence on a sometimes unpredictable and demanding United States.

²¹ Ergil D, 'On "security"', and Afrikaner I, 'Security in South Africa: Past and present', *TOSAV Letter*, Foundation for the Research of Societal Problems, Ankara, December 1998.

Cancellation of the contract was followed by a blanket embargo on all arms sales to Turkey, imposed by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), chaired by Kader Asmal, minister of water affairs. After representations to the NCACC by the DFA in early 1997, the committee adopted a policy that requests by South African arms manufacturers to export armaments to Turkey would be considered on their merits on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the standard criteria applicable to all applications. While this was an improvement and technically meant that licences could be granted for the marketing or sale of certain categories of arms to Turkey, in fact the NCACC had no intention of approving any such applications.

In the first half of 1997, AJ (Riaan) Eksteen, the South African ambassador, addressed letters to the president and the prime minister of Turkey advising them of this ostensible good news.

In July 1997, shortly after presenting his credentials to the Turkish president, who raised the issue in private discussion afterwards, Ambassador Wheeler called on the deputy under secretary for political affairs of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Ali Tuygan. Wheeler sought to reinforce the message of his predecessor, Eksteen, by providing Tuygan with a document listing countries to which arms sales were forbidden, pointing out that Turkey's name did not appear on it. As agreed with the DFA before his departure to Ankara, he also provided a list of the criteria that were applied when considering export applications. These included observance of human rights and the impact on the regional balance of power of the supply of any armaments.

To Wheeler's surprise, his comments, intended to be conciliatory, were not well received. Tuygan said that South Africa could keep its criteria and the Foreign Ministry would place South Africa on its 'Red List' of countries from which arms imports were forbidden. The Red List already contained the names of many West European

countries, to which was added one developing country, South Africa. The list was rigorously enforced until about 1999, when the Turkish authorities realised that their pique was denying them arms supplies at a time when it was becoming progressively more difficult for them to obtain arms from abroad.

The attitude of the Turkish authorities further hardened by a remark made by Kader Asmal to a reporter of the *Sunday Independent* during an off-the-cuff interview in late 1997 in the lobby of a Johannesburg hotel, and afterwards indignantly reported in the Turkish media. He defended his committee's decision to authorise the supply of military equipment to Saudi Arabia, but gratuitously added that South Africa was unwilling to sell Rooivalk helicopters to Turkey because of its human rights record and its invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The question seemed to be whether Turkey was to be judged by the human rights standards that prevail in the other countries of the region, or those of Europe. Clearly the latter, while countries of the South were treated differently.

It is obvious that factors other than just the criteria were at issue when lethal arms could be supplied to Algeria and Saudi Arabia, countries with a poorer record of democratic governance and human rights observance, while no military equipment — lethal or non-lethal — would be sold to Turkey. In fact, in this period, Algeria was acting harshly against opponents when Islamists were denied their electoral victory and acts of terrorism ensued. The difference seemed to be that Algeria is an African country and Turkey aspires to be a European one. Added to this was ANC sympathy for its old ally in exile, the Kurdish insurgent group, the PKK.

All approaches to the embassy by Turkish arms importers inquiring whether certain products or even advisory services would be approved by South Africa were rebuffed by Pretoria. Whatever the considerations and whatever views one has of the arms trade, the South African armaments industry lost vast sums of money that the

Turks were willing to spend on South African arms and defence materiel in those years.

One does not trifle with the Turkish military, and South Africa and its representatives immediately were consigned to outer darkness. We were never, except perhaps by accident, invited to any military event, show or facility with other members of the diplomatic corps. This is in sharp contrast to the atmosphere during Ambassador Jacobs's term, described above.

The one exception to this chilly treatment of South Africa's official representatives was at the annual commemoration of those members of all forces who lost their lives during the Gallipoli landings by Allied troops in 1915. Attending with other representatives of member states of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, France and Germany, the ambassador lays a wreath at the Turkish Monument to the Martyrs of the Dardenelles, after which the South African flag is raised and the anthem played by a Turkish military band.

Interestingly, the Turkish authorities indicated that they were prepared to accept a South African military attaché, even if he were non-resident in Turkey. The South African authorities were unswayed by these blandishments, even from the country with the sixth largest military in the world and NATO's second largest force. The reason cited was financial.

In July 2001, the helicopters that South Africa was supposed to be maintaining were still in a disassembled state awaiting the return of the South African technicians.

However, Ambassador LMS Mngqikana was invited to and attended the Turkish International Defence Exhibition in 2003. So the ice is starting to melt on the Turkish side.

The extent of this warming of relations is demonstrated by an article in the *Turkish Daily News* in November 2004 concerning the clearance of mines on the border with Syria. In part it reads:²²

[Foreign Trade Minister] Tuzmen said the Finance Ministry would be in charge of opening a tender for the mine clearance and added that the job was a complicated one requiring expertise at global standards.

‘I think it will be an international job,’ he told the Anatolia [semi-official] news agency in the southern province of Gaziantep. *He said he had met with officials of a company based in South Africa that specialized in mine clearance during a recent visit to that country* [emphasis added].

The South African company is now expected to present an assessment of the mine-clearing task on the border to the Turkish authorities, following which a tender will be launched.

That this information is contained in a report from the Anatolia news agency, a semi-official organ, demonstrates how far relations have advanced since the red listing in 1997. From the South African side, even the provision of the assessment would previously have been prohibited in terms of the Foreign Military Assistance Act.

It seems that a concerted effort is being made to place the defence and military industrial relationship on a sound basis, and the visit of the Turkish prime minister to South Africa could represent a turning point in this process.

The Kurdish issue, the Öcalan affair, and their effect on relations

The definition of the borders of the Republic of Turkey in the Treaty of Lausanne ended any prospect of the Kurdish state proposed in the Treaty of Sèvres. Atatürk initially referred to the Republic of

²² *Turkish Daily News* (Ankara), ‘Turkey prepares for tender to clear mines on Syrian border’, 19 November 2004, p.4.

Turkey as a country of Turks and Kurds.²³ When Kurdish discontent led to the so-called Shaykh Said Revolt in 1925 and its suppression by Turkish forces, however, all reference to the Kurds in Atatürk's rhetoric ceased. All citizens of Turkey were henceforth to be Turks, just as the borders as defined at Lausanne were to be immutable in terms of Kemalist ideology. However, no limitations were placed on Kurds who associated themselves unreservedly with Turkey and declared their Turkishness. The most significant example for this purpose is Hikmet Çetin, who was foreign minister at the time the South African Embassy in Ankara was opened, and later became speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly. By contrast, in April 1979, Serefettin Elci, a minister in the Turkish cabinet, was sentenced to two years and four months' hard labour for publicly claiming to be a Kurd.²⁴ An official publication in English, *Facts about Turkey*, stated categorically in 1998 that 'There is no "Kurdish" problem in Turkey and citizens living in South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia are an integral part of the Turkish nation.'²⁵

Abdullah (Apo) Öcalan, a Marxist Kurdish student in the elite Faculty of Political Science of the University of Ankara, led the formation of 'the most effective rebel force ever to take up arms against the Turkish state'.²⁶ The Kurdistan Workers Party, better known by its acronym PKK and more recently as 'Konga-Gel', was formed in 1978 and from 1984 commenced waging a brutal insurgency campaign against the Turkish state that continued for 14 years. Violence, involving atrocities on both sides, was paralleled by a political campaign abroad to win international support for the Kurdish cause.

²³ McDowall D, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 2nd ed. New York: IB Taurus, 2000, p.187ff.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.413.

²⁵ Directorate General of Press and Information of the Prime Ministry, *Facts About Turkey*. Ankara, 1998, p.192.

²⁶ Kinzer S, *Crescent & Star: Turkey between Two Worlds*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001, p.111ff.

South Africa was also the target of these blandishments. South African politicians found it difficult to distinguish between the just cause of the Kurds to obtain cultural rights and the ability to establish overtly ethnic political parties to represent them if they wished, and on the other hand, the PKK, as an organisation willing to commit atrocities to achieve its objective of a separate Kurdish state. While South Africa declared its support for the concept of the territorial integrity of states, notably Iraq (the other state with a large Kurdish minority), there were various manifestations of support for the Kurdish cause, which were interpreted by the Turkish authorities as support for the PKK and the on-going insurgency it was waging in the south-east, and randomly in tourist resorts and other centres in the rest of Turkey.

In 1997, a so-called 'peace train', which was to convey leading sympathisers from Brussels across Europe and ultimately to Diyarbakir, the major administrative centre in the Kurdish south-eastern region of Turkey, was organised. The participants entered Turkey by bus and travelled to the city of Sanliurfa in the south-east before being detained and returned to Istanbul to be expelled from the country. Among those aboard was Imam Gassan Solomon, at the time a member of the South African Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs. While officials of the various embassies who had citizens in the group were allowed to meet them on the bus outside Ankara, they could do no more to assist them.

Officials of the DFA on more than one occasion had meetings with representatives or sympathisers of the PKK, both in Pretoria and in Brussels. One of them was an employee of the South African parastatal armaments company, Denel. A name that also kept cropping up was that of Mizgin Sen, a very effective woman representative of the PKK in Europe. These meetings led to a degree of tension between the embassy and the DFA, as it was the view of the former that little could be achieved by developing any sort of relationship with the PKK, hardly a paragon of rectitude in the way

it conducted its campaign. On the other hand, it felt that attempts to build sound relations with Turkey could be set back, because the Turkish intelligence service no doubt was tracking such meetings with the South African authorities.

The then chair of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Portfolio Committee, Ebrahim Ismael Ebrahim, was reported in June 1999 to have participated in a PKK event in Hamburg, sending a message to the Turkish authorities not helpful to improving relations between South Africa and Turkey.

The embassy was not unsympathetic to the Kurdish (as opposed to the PKK) cause. Nor did it accept the Turkish position that there were no Kurds, but merely rebellious 'mountain Turks'. An attempt in 1997 to discuss the Kurdish issue with senior Foreign Ministry officials was met with the ideological Kemalist line that essentially denied the existence of such beings as Kurds in Turkey.

Throughout the insurgency, Öcalan had operated from Syria, whose president had his own feud with the Turks. In the latter part of 1998, Turkey made threatening noises that convinced President Assad that it would be wise for Öcalan to leave Syria. Initially he went to Russia, but he no longer enjoyed the same sympathy as during the Soviet era and was unceremoniously shunted off to Italy, where the left-leaning government permitted him to stay. Effective Turkish pressure, by the cancellation of contracts, forced the Italian to expel him from the country.

Media reports began reaching Turkey from Italy to the effect that President Mandela had agreed that Öcalan would be received in South Africa. Early in January 1999, Faruk Luğoğlu, deputy under secretary for political affairs of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, telephoned the South African ambassador²⁷ directly and told him

²⁷ The ambassador referred to was the author of this article.

that the minister, Ismael Cem, was very concerned to hear news reports that Öcalan was to be granted sanctuary in South Africa.²⁸

While the media clamoured for comments and interviews with me as the Ambassador, I was relieved to receive a message from Pretoria stating that Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad and Director-General Jackie Selebi had discussed the matter and decided that Öcalan would under no circumstances be allowed to enter South Africa.

I called the Ministry and asked to see the Foreign Minister as I had an important message to convey to him about Öcalan. The usual waiting period was dispensed with and within an hour the Ambassador saw Cem in his office, surrounded by his advisers. He proceeded to read the essential paragraph from the message from Pretoria. Cem was clearly delighted and relieved and said that (it being during Ramadan) he was about to go to the Presidential Palace for an *iftar* meal to break the fast and would inform the President immediately.

What had threatened to be a third major issue that would have immensely complicated South African–Turkish relations had evaporated. If Öcalan had been received in South Africa, the South African embassy in Turkey might just as well have closed its doors.

In this highly charged atmosphere, Greece gave Öcalan refuge in its ambassadorial residence in Nairobi, Kenya, until a permanent refuge could be found. In circumstances that remain unclear, Öcalan was put into a car at the Greek Embassy and the next day Prime Minister Ecevit announced on TV that he had been captured and was in Turkey.

When the news reached South Africa, the ambassador in Ankara received an angry telephone call from the director general of foreign affairs, Jackie Selebi, who said that Turkey was treating a fellow African state like a banana republic by abducting Öcalan from Kenyan territory.

²⁸ From the author's personal notes.

There was, however, little either of them could do about the matter, except continue to express to Turkey an interest in Öcalan's receiving a fair trial and the hope that the death penalty would not be carried out, were it to be imposed by the court — as it certainly would be. The court sat on Imrali, an island in the Sea of Marmara, off Istanbul. Before the hearing of the case began, the Foreign Ministry briefed diplomatic missions on the procedure. It was evident that it would be difficult to gain access and the South African Embassy was quite willing to leave the onerous task of following the trial, at a considerable distance from the embassy's base, to larger missions with a more direct and specific interest in the outcome of the trial.

Öcalan was found guilty, sentenced to death, and incarcerated in solitary confinement on the same island. As his death sentence was subsequently commuted to life imprisonment, he remains there to this day.

Steps have since been taken by the Turkish authorities to accept that the Kurds are, in fact, a minority that must be recognised by Turkey. In response to the Copenhagen Criteria for admission to the EU, one of which refers to the need for 'stable democracy, respect for human rights, the rule of law and the *protection of minorities*', Turkey has begun to allow broadcasts by the state broadcaster in Kurdish and the teaching of Kurdish in certain private schools. This followed the acceptance by the authorities of the significant victories of the Kurdish HADEP party in the 1999 local government elections.

Exploiting the confusion in northern Iraq following the deposition of Saddam Hussein, the PKK have since November 2004 resumed acts of violence in south-eastern Turkey, demonstrating that they are not interested merely in the granting of language and cultural rights within the Turkish state. Instead they are reverting to their original demand for the creation of a separate Kurdish state. This is a demand that Turkey, with its fear of dismemberment as proposed by

the Treaty of Sèvres, will resist forcefully. It is also an outcome that no other state in the region, including those with significant Kurdish minorities — Iraq, Iran and Syria — will countenance.

South Africa has also expressed its support for the concept of territorial integrity of states, in line with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) decision to deal with similar problems of divided ethnic communities that exist in Africa. Ambassador Neels Jacobs (1993–95) noted that in a conversation with Hikmet Cetin, a liberal politician of Kurdish origin, the latter was perplexed by the contrast between the favourable attitude of the South African government/ANC towards Kurdish separatism and its opposition toward the desire in 1994 of certain segments of the South African electorate for self-determination (presumably a reference to the idea of a *volkstaat* — a separate Afrikaner state).²⁹

The mixed signals from South African political leaders, sometimes based on pre-1990 sentiments that are no longer relevant, need to be eliminated as efforts are made to construct positive relations with Turkey.

Human rights

The Öcalan trial, coming at a time when Europe was deciding whether to accept Turkey as a candidate for membership of the European Union (EU), placed Turkey in an awkward position.

If it executed Öcalan, as public opinion demanded, it would have had to accept that candidacy of the EU would be denied. As Hikmet Cetin explained in a conversation with several ambassadors, the Turkish parliament had had opportunities in the past to remove the death penalty from the statute book, but had refused. Now, under external pressure, it would probably be obliged to do so. No

²⁹ Telephone conversation with the author, 15 February 2005.

executions had been carried out since 1984, but the issue and those sentenced to death remained in limbo.

A number of human rights organisations exist in Turkey and the embassy made a point of making contact with them. Perhaps the most prominent figure among these organisations was Akin Birdal, head of the Human Rights Association. During 1998, Birdal was shot in his office by an individual who came there ostensibly for assistance with a human rights problem. It subsequently emerged that he was a right-wing security operative, although it was not clear whether or not he was acting as an individual, but no doubt if he had succeeded in assassinating Birdal, there would have been few regrets among certain sections of the establishment.

In the event, and probably by grim determination and force of personality, Birdal survived and recovered to such an extent that he was able to attend his association's Human Rights Day reception in December 1998. In order to make a statement on South Africa's attitude to the observance of human rights, in line with the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, the South African ambassador was one of the few political and diplomatic figures who attended. A photograph of Birdal and the ambassador appeared in the local English-language newspaper, the *Turkish Daily News*, which adopted a sympathetic attitude toward Birdal.

The embassy became a member of a group of diplomatic missions that actively followed human rights issues. The first secretary attended meetings of the group and was on the distribution list of notices of trials with human rights overtones. He attended a number of these court hearings as a demonstration against South Africa's attitude toward human rights, the only black diplomat and the only representative of a developing country present.

Turkey was one of the few countries to have a minister for human rights. No doubt because of South Africa's emphasis on human

rights and the embassy's public profile on the issue, the minister, Hikmet Sami Turk, attended a South African Freedom Day reception and then invited the ambassador to his office at the Prime Ministry. He pointed out that the Turkish Constitution, like South Africa's, made provision for human rights. This statement is also contained in official publications, such as *Facts about Turkey*.³⁰ While this is true, the weakness of his argument was that each such provision was made subject to the over-riding requirements of national security.

While Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, for instance, issued a circular requiring officials, especially security officers, the police and the gendarmerie in the rural provinces, to act in terms of the law and according to acceptable standards, there was evidence that in practice this instruction was not observed with any degree of seriousness. Nevertheless, Hikmet Sami Turk, later in the capacity of minister of justice, made serious efforts to consult human rights NGOs and other interested parties in a structured way in order to move the process forward. The Turkish authorities expressed an interest in, and were provided with, the material used by the South African Police Service to train members in human rights matters, in the same way that senior members of the Turkish judiciary asked for the South African Constitution.

Even as Turkey was coming under increasing pressure, especially from the countries of the EU, to improve the standards of its human rights practice, various prominent politicians and journalists, including the current prime minister, Recip Tayyip Erdoğan, continued to be tried and jailed on flimsy charges under Article 312 of the Penal Code, which regulates penalties for those accused of inciting unrest, rebellion, hatred or recession on the basis of religion, ethnicity and class.

³⁰ Directorate General of Press and Information of the Prime Ministry, 1998, *op. cit.*, p.145.

Nevertheless, the desire to move towards membership of the EU and the scrutiny of the EU gave EU members leverage, and they put pressure on Turkey to conform with, or perhaps more correctly to work towards, international norms and meeting the Copenhagen Criteria.³¹

While the capture of Öcalan was a victory for Turkey, and brought the PKK insurgency to an end, it also placed Turkey under great pressure to terminate the use of state security courts with military judges and later to remove the death penalty. The Ecevit government, prior to November 2002, was able to move the reform agenda forward but was limited by the willingness of parliament and the coalition partners to give serious attention to what needed to be done. Without these measures, Turkey's prospects of moving towards EU membership would have been doomed.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry's active policy towards Africa

The main focus of Turkish foreign policy is and will remain the EU and achievement of the objective of becoming a member, the US, Turkic Central Asia, the Middle East and, more recently, rapidly improving relations with Russia. Even so, an attempt has been made by the Foreign Ministry to expand and improve relations with Asia, Africa and Latin America, until then on the periphery of its interest.

In June 1998 a meeting of all stakeholders — Turkish ambassadors serving in 12 African countries, officials of other ministries, NGOs, and the private sector — was convened by the Foreign Ministry to discuss a proposed new policy of 'Outreach to Africa'. An extensive list of positive recommendations emerged, which were presented to the Turkish president for his endorsement, thereby ensuring their political weight.

³¹ <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/enlargement.htm>.

Proposals included membership 'ex region' of the African Development Bank; a technical assistance programme for Sahel countries, especially in the context of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference; military co-operation; an increase in the number of scholarships offered; encouraging Turkish private investment; and making Turkish public opinion aware of Africa.

The task of implementing the policy was initially assigned to Numan Hazar, who had recently returned from Nigeria, where he had been the Turkish ambassador. As Turkey again focuses on relations beyond those with Europe and the US, the Outreach to Africa initiative is gaining greater importance.

High-level visits from and to South Africa

Before 1997, the only senior political figure of the post-1994 South African government to visit Turkey was Minerals and Energy Minister Pik Botha, who passed through Ankara on his return from Kazakhstan.

Between 1997 and 2003, only four senior South African officials visited Turkey. They were Tebogo Mafole, deputy director-general of foreign affairs, in October 1997; the metro mayor of Pretoria, Joyce Ngele, the first ANC politician to visit Turkey, in August 1998; GJ Grobler, chief director: Europe at the DFA, in 1999; and Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, who came to Turkey for the first time in June 2000 as part of an Eastern European tour. Like Mafole, Pahad was visibly impressed by the scale of the economic activity and level of development he encountered in Turkey, especially after what he had observed in some of the former Soviet bloc countries he had just visited.

Between 13 and 18 October 2003, a large delegation led by Deputy President Jacob Zuma and including Minister Jeff Radebe; Susan Shabangu, deputy minister of minerals and energy affairs; and

Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad, as well as representatives of parastatal corporations, visited Ankara and Istanbul for bilateral talks with their Turkish counterparts and to meet business leaders. Ten years had passed since the establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey and nine years since the ANC came to power.

In comparison to these rare South African official visits to Turkey, a noticeably larger number of visits at various levels were undertaken to small states in the region, to the Ukraine and to Greece. Yet Turkey, as South Africa's largest trading partner in the region, except for Israel, was consistently by-passed.

The Turkish side began the exchange of visits cautiously, when Ambassador Murat Sungar (successor to Ambassador Tuygan) reciprocated Mafole's visit early in 1998, shortly before Mafole's untimely death. But there was no response to an invitation to send a high-level emissary to the 75th anniversary of the Turkish Republic in 1999, or to the celebration of the 700th anniversary of the Ottoman Empire a year later. The resident ambassador was left to do the honours as best he could. In contrast, Turkish State Minister Suayip Usenmez represented his government at the inauguration of President Thabo Mbeki in 1999 and reported very positively to his government on the potential for improved relations.

On the other hand, former state president FW de Klerk visited Istanbul with his wife Elita in July 2000, at the invitation of a private Turkish economic and social studies foundation, TESEV, to address a seminar on Challenges to Peace in the New Millennium, with the unspoken purpose on the part of the organisers, including Ishak Alaton, of drawing lessons from the process of reconciliation in South Africa relevant to the inevitable changes that lay ahead for Turkey. De Klerk's message of moderation and his positive description of the events that he had initiated and in which he had participated in South Africa were well received in business and

media circles in Istanbul. No attention was paid to the visit in official quarters.

President Ahmed Necdet Sezer headed the Turkish delegation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002. Although the visit had no discernable bilateral character, his impressions and those of his delegation of the South Africa to which they were exposed were probably not without effect.

Official South African interest in the potential of Turkey has been demonstrated more at provincial than at national level. In June 2001, the Free State MEC for economics and development, Z Dingani, led an official delegation to Turkey³² to seek Turkish investment, particularly in the jewellery manufacturing industry,³³ to add value to South African-produced gold, using vacant properties on the Free State goldfields. Several delegations from the Western Cape government, including one led by the MEC for agriculture, HG van Rensburg, in May 2000,³⁴ and by the premier, Ebrahim Rasool, in September 2004, have sought areas of common interest with Turkish investors, for instance, in the wine and ostrich industries.

The deputy minister of environmental affairs and tourism, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, visited Turkey in 2004 and was enthusiastic about what she observed. 'This is a welcome development and demonstrates that tourism is once again receiving the attention it merits.'

As a method of increasing mutual knowledge and trust, the exchange of visits by parliamentary groups has never materialised, mainly because the South African parliament consistently has resisted the creation of bilateral interest or working groups linking

³² South African Embassy, Ankara, *Guney Africa Haber Dosyasi*, 2nd ed., 2001.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2000.

South Africa and other states and exchanging visits. The Turkish parliament has had a Turkish–South African Group and has made a number of attempts to interest the South African parliament in the creation of a counterpart. These rebuffs may have been in line with a general policy, or the lack thereof, on the formation of such groups, but it sent the message that South African parliamentarians were not interested in learning more about Turkey, with all the negativity that elicited.

The issue of reciprocity

Turkish officialdom is inordinately sensitive to slights and insists on reciprocity to the *n*th degree. Thus, while Ambassador Jacobs was received by President Demirel for a farewell call on his departure, Turkish protocol refused to arrange such appointments for me with either the president or the foreign minister, because departing Turkish ambassadors to South Africa had not had the opportunity of calling on the president or foreign minister before their departure. I was, however, hosted at a farewell lunch at the Ankara Palas, the official guesthouse, at which the deputy under secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Ugur Ziyal, was fulsome in his praise for the work I had done to promote relations during my term. Presumably this function matched the lunches given at the Diplomatic Guesthouse in Pretoria for departing Turkish ambassadors. One can only speculate as to whether the lengthy gap between the departure of Ambassador Sermet Atacanli from Pretoria and the arrival of his successor, Ambassador Ferhat Ataman, was intended to match the gap between my departure from Ankara and the arrival of my successor, LMS Mngqikana. (See Attachment 2 for the list of ambassadors and their dates of arrival and departure.)

Signing of agreements

Perhaps unlike South African officials, those in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean set much store by the signing of agreements as a demonstration of the progress being made in creating a legal basis for and the strengthening of bilateral relations between countries. A list of agreements to serve as a checklist for future work was drawn up at an early stage after South Africa became a democracy in 1994. However, despite great effort on the part of both the DFAs and the two embassies, Turkish and South African, in the nearly 11 years since 1994, only six agreements have been signed.

Textile Agreement

Before 1994, South Africa, through the agency of the DTI, entered into a confidential agreement granting preferential import duties to Turkish textiles. This created problems with South Africa's other Southern African Customs Union partners, who had not been consulted or advised.

Its termination later also caused dismay in Turkey. This demonstrated the lack of understanding in many quarters in that country of the profound change that had come about in South Africa and that there would be new ways of doing things in future.

Air Services

The first agreement signed after 1994, the Air Services Agreement, was necessary to legitimise the service started by Turkish Airlines between Istanbul and Johannesburg, with connections to many other cities in the region and beyond. Turkish aircraft flew full between the cities between 1996 and 2001, when the dramatic fall in the value of the rand made the route unprofitable and provided the airline with a reason to divert aircraft to more profitable routes. Its timing could

not have been worse: it was just before 9/11, when many routes, but not those to South Africa, suffered a serious drop in traffic and the rand value rebounded dramatically.

Turkish Airlines had earlier decided to terminate its service to Johannesburg and Cape Town, but, as a government-owned airline, was pressured into continuing the flights. It then indicated that economic viability necessitated four flights a week. Business people who fly in business class provide the revenue that make a service viable, but two flights a week (later even three) did not allow the quick turn-around that business-oriented customers expect.

The airline suggested that the solution lay in a partnership agreement with South African Airways (SAA), which would require each airline to fly twice a week between Istanbul and Johannesburg and vice versa.

A meeting was set up for discussions in Istanbul in June 2000, on the very day Deputy Minister Pahad was in the city. The minister was dismayed when he was confronted by relatively junior Turkish Airlines officials at an official reception in his honour. They told him that the SAA delegation had simply not arrived and had offered no apology. Not surprisingly, the chief executive of Turkish Airlines did not attend the minister's reception, as promised.

The deputy minister wrote to Coleman Andrews, chief executive of SAA at the time, expressing his displeasure, but SAA was typically unmoved.

Agreements Signed in 2000

Three agreements, a Tourism Co-operation Agreement, a Protocol on Consultation and an Agreement for the Mutual Promotion and

Protection of Investments were signed during the visit of Deputy Minister Pahad in 2000.

It is difficult to discern any positive results from the high sounding sentiments contained in the Tourism Co-operation Agreement, as the respective countries are not a priority for the tourism promotion agencies, SA Tourism and its Turkish counterpart, leaving such promotion as is done to the embassies and to the sporadic interest of photo-journalists and TV producers. Travel companies offer package holidays independent of any promotional efforts by government agencies.

The Protocol on Consultation was proposed by South Africa to formalise a process started with the exchange of visits by Mafole and Sungar in 1998 and 1999, but observed since by both sides more in the breach.

It was the view of the embassy, accepted at least at desk level in the DFA, that an even-handed approach should be maintained in relations between South Africa and Turkey on the one hand, and South Africa and Greece and the Republic of Cyprus (Greek Cyprus) on the other.

In application of this policy, for instance, proposals originating from the South African ambassador in Athens that ex-president Mandela should visit Cyprus to facilitate a peace accord between Greek and Turkish Cyprus were not accepted by the DFA, after it was argued by Ankara that a visit to Cyprus before the Ataturk Peace Prize issue was resolved by means of a visit by Mandela to Turkey would not be in line with the even-handed approach and would further antagonise the Turks.

In 1999, however, the Ministry of Defence promoted and had signed a Defence Co-operation Agreement with the Republic of Cyprus. Were this to become public knowledge, as undoubtedly it would, it

would add flames to the fire of South Africa's refusal to supply arms to Turkey.

It was decided, therefore, that during the visit to Ankara in August 1999 by GJ Grobler, chief director: Europe at the DFA, he would meet privately at the ambassador's official residence with Numan Hazar, who handled Turkey's Africa policy in the Foreign Ministry — his counterpart in effect — and propose the signature of a Protocol on Consultation.

The protocol was signed by Deputy Minister Pahad and his Turkish counterpart, Faruk Luğoğlu, undersecretary of the ministry, a year later.

While the protocol has fallen into disuse, the 2005 prime ministerial visit may present the opportunity for its re-activation, at deputy minister level.

The third agreement related to the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments, a useful tool in the armoury for promoting foreign direct investment between the two countries.

Other Agreements and Proposed Agreements

The proposed visa agreement, formalising the practice of the two countries not to require visas for 30-day tourist and business visits, was never signed. In July 2003, Turkey imposed onerous requirements for the issue of visas to South Africans.³⁵ This was done to help mute criticism from the EU that Turkey is an easy point of access for refugees and economic migrants from Africa.

³⁵ See conditions listed on the web site of the Turkish Embassy, <http://www.turkishembassy.co.za>.

It is unfortunate that this decision, together with the absence of direct flights between the two countries, will have had a negative effect on what was the growing tourist traffic between two countries that have much to offer. It is to be hoped that the momentum created by the 2005 prime ministerial visit will result in the restoration of the air link.

Turkey offers to South Africans 'faith tourism' for members of the three monotheistic religions; motivational seminars and visits for company groups, remnants of Greek, Hittite and other civilisations in its museums and archaeological sites; Byzantine and Islamic architecture; rare natural beauty; and the benefits of seasonal difference; combined with sophisticated tourist facilities and excellent shopping.

South Africa maintains its visa-free access for Turkish passport holders, who can experience the exotic wildlife they are exposed to on cable TV, natural beauty, top quality wines, visits to wine estates and casinos, and the advantage of warm weather during the northern winter, together with world-class hotels and facilities for those seeking a new and unfamiliar destination.

Cultural and Scientific Co-operation Agreement

After many years of inaction on part of the South African Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, an agreement on co-operation in the field of education, arts and culture, science and technology, sport, recreation and youth affairs was signed during the visit to Turkey of Minister Ben Ngubane, primarily for a UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) conference in 2003.

a. Culture

The colourful nature of Turkish and South African traditional cultures made this an obvious area of co-operation. Even before the cultural relationship was formalised in this way, South African cultural events were staged in Turkey.

The consulate in Istanbul arranged a very successful South Africa week in 1996, replicated by the embassy in Ankara and Istanbul in March 1998. A Zulu dance group provided entertainment at a local five-star hotel, while self-paying guests enjoyed a dinner that featured ostrich, crocodile and snoek, washed down with South African wine. To coincide with the latter event, the National Director of SAIIA, Dr Greg Mills, gave addresses at a number of universities and to invited guests, as well as conducting newspaper interviews to add 'intellectual content' to the week. A similar initiative in 2003 was sabotaged by the outbreak of the Iraq war.

Annually, from 1998, a group of children from one of South Africa's provinces was invited to participate in the Turkish International Children's Festival on 22 April, which coincides with the anniversary of the adoption of the first Turkish republican constitution in 1924. The performance by the children made an enormous impact at the festival, which was telecast on national television, as well as at the South African Freedom Day reception in Ankara on 27 April. One such group also performed at an African Cultural Night presented by all the African embassies in Ankara in 2001. Participation has continued in spite of the cessation of flights by Turkish Airlines which transported the groups to Turkey without cost. Although a group from the Eastern Cape will participate in 2005, resumption of the flights would facilitate initiatives like this.

The embassy, and the consulate in Istanbul before it, was fortunate to have the Drakensberg Boys Choir pass through Turkey in 1993, 1999 and 2000. The opportunity was used to arrange concerts in

Istanbul, Ankara and the southern city of Adana, with the co-operation of local authorities and Rotary Clubs. In 1999, the proceeds were donated to the earthquake relief fund, a gesture that was much appreciated.

South African cultural groups were invited to participate in several regional traditional arts festivals in Turkey, which they did with success for several years. A travelling exhibition, the Santam International Children's Art Exhibition, with the best works from a world-wide competition, including a Turkish prize-winner, was put on display in Ankara, Mersin and Izmir.

Turks have a colourful and dynamic culture and are enthusiastic about exchanges from South Africa. The South African Department of Arts and Culture have made available a number of excellent music and other groups in support of initiatives by the Embassy in Ankara. In addition, groups like the Istanbul Symphony Orchestra are keen to tour South Africa. These laudable initiatives which are so important in raising the profile of the two countries reciprocally, often founder on the rocks of lack of funding. The budgets provided to embassies do not allow them to grasp all the opportunities that arise and to respond to all the requests for cultural groups that inundate them.

Although the offer was long neglected, Turkey has allocated six bursaries for university education to students from South Africa. The first students made use of these bursaries in 2000. A conscious effort was made to find financially disadvantaged students from the non-metropolitan provinces, and the first students came from Limpopo.

A small trickle of Turkish students has long studied at South African universities, usually in disciplines like mining engineering. An effort was made to bring to a wider audience the fact that a world-class tertiary education in English is available from South African universities at a fraction of the cost that parents were paying for their

children to go to institutions in the US, Britain, Australia or France. In some cases, South African university authorities had not tumbled to the fact that foreign students could be a very lucrative source of funding, although by the beginning of the new millennium, there was progress at universities like Pretoria and Wits.

b. Science

TUBITAK, the Turkish equivalent of the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and other research councils realised that in certain areas, such as livestock breeding and agriculture, South Africa possessed technology and the results of scientific research that could be relevant to Turkey's circumstances and level of development.

South Africa, on the other hand, was more interested in co-operating in the scientific field with countries that could offer it access to advanced technology.

There was a view that direct contacts established between academics and researchers who share real interests in the same scientific fields are more useful and productive than overarching political agreements at government or even university administration level. Such contacts did exist between scientific researchers in fields such as agronomy, viticulture and mining technology. Contacts between oceanographic and sea fisheries researchers at the University of Cape Town and the University of Mersin in southern Turkey were discussed, but never formalised.

In order to help address its energy deficit, strenuous efforts have been made by Turkish scientific/business interests and the embassy to interest the Turkish authorities and ESKOM and their partners in the export of the pebble bed nuclear reactor (PBNR) to Turkey once it has passed the development stage. The fact that Deputy President

Zuma's delegation included a representative of PBNR is an indication of some progress in this matter.

This is perhaps one of the most useful outcomes of high-level visits. Issues that have lain unattended for lengthy periods of time are dusted off and agreements are readied for signature so that the ministers on both sides will have something to show for the visits.

It will be interesting to establish the extent to which the signing of the agreement on cooperation in the fields of arts, culture, science and technology in 2003 leads to and enables real co-operation at the scientific level. But the act of signing indicates that such co-operation now enjoys official endorsement.

Police Co-operation Agreement

While the Turkish police originally indicated that they were experiencing no crime problems that required their co-operation with their South African counterparts, a proposal for an agreement that originated in a conversation in 2000 between the ambassador and the head of security (an office just below that of provincial governor) in Mersin, southern Turkey, in April 1999 was enthusiastically received by the South African Police Service

The changing world environment after 9/11 may have brought different perceptions of threat and the agreement was concluded in a relatively short time, being signed on 14 October 2004.

An area where the Turkish authorities experienced difficulty was with illegal immigrants who claimed to be South African. From time to time, these individuals were brought to the embassy, which was for a while the only one representing a sub-Saharan country. A short conversation between these persons and members of the transferred staff, who between them could speak at least three of South Africa's

official languages and were familiar with several others, soon proved whether or not they were truly South African citizens. More often than not, they came from some other African country.

Proposed Double Taxation Agreement

After much work was done on both sides to draft a Double Taxation Agreement that would facilitate trade and investment flows between the two countries, nothing came of these efforts. Differences in the tax systems and the impact of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rescue programme for Turkey in the years after 1999 may all have taken their toll.

It has been announced, however, that an agreement is to be signed during the Prime Minister's visit.³⁶

The Turkic factor

Although Turkey has a population that is (nominally) 99% Muslim, the people are not of Arab origin. Instead, they trace their roots to the nomadic tribes of Central Asia that produced legendary military leaders such as Ghengiz Khan and Tamberlane (Timur the Lame) or, as he is more correctly known in the Turkic world, Amir Timur.

For this reason, Turkey has a close affinity of language and culture with the Central Asian states that emerged in 1991 from the collapse of the Soviet Union. These include Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, west of the Caspian Sea. (The remaining Central Asia state, Tajikistan, is predominantly Persian-speaking and the links are more tenuous.) These links are regularly strengthened by cultural conferences, some at presidential level, bursaries to Turkish universities and the establishment of

³⁶ Carli Lourens, *Business Day*, 1 March 2005, p.2.

Turkish schools in the newly independent states. Efficient air transport links and trade and commercial relations have been created.

In addition, as Muslim countries, they have followed the Turkish secular model of statecraft and, to varying degrees, consider Islamism a threat to their security. The South African authorities did themselves no harm in the political perceptions of Turks and Central Asians by being among the first governments to recognise the independence of the new states and, except in the case of Kazakhstan, to accredit the ambassador in Ankara to these states.

While it was difficult for South Africans to understand this decision, it is most easily understood when it is explained that the Central Asians see Moscow as the colonialist metropole.

Effect of the Greek community in South Africa

Besides the very visible issues described above, the presence of a large and politically influential Greek, and especially Greek Cypriot, community in South Africa for many years acted as a brake on the development of warm relations with Turkey. As relations between Turkey and Greece started to improve in the aftermath of the 1999 earthquakes, so space opened for better relations between South Africa and Turkey.

Regrettably, the decision of Greek Cypriots, unlike the Turkish Cypriots, in a 2004 referendum to oppose the Kofi Annan plan for the reunification of Cyprus raises the potential for this to continue as a complicating factor.

Multilateral issues

Although the two countries are on opposite sides of the North–South divide, there are several issues of a global and multilateral nature in which South Africa and Turkey have common interests. Both countries, for instance, are founding members of organisations such as the United Nations.

In 1997, the US Department of Commerce identified both Turkey and South Africa as among the ten Big Emerging Markets, while the World Bank categorised Turkey as one of the ten markets with the greatest development potential. It is not surprising, therefore, that they were both invited by the G7 to become members of a larger informal bloc, the G20 (not to be confused with the G20+ in the context of the Doha round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations). Other members of this grouping are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, the EU, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Korea.

Several arms control and disarmament issues also have resonance. Turkey has always maintained that it 'lives in a rough neighbourhood', which necessitated the landmining of large portions of its border. As relations have improved with Bulgaria, Greece and Syria, it has decided to de-mine the areas next to these borders, as well as those on the border with former Soviet Georgia. It has taken an interest in the Ottawa process on the banning of anti-personnel landmines and secured membership of the Missile Technology Control Regime. Like South Africa, Turkey is a member of the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD). While Turkey is a member of the Wassenaar Arrangement on the control of conventional weapons, South Africa has not yet been invited to join.

South Africa and Turkey have an interest in future membership of the UN Security Council, with Turkey aspiring to a non-permanent seat for Europe, while South Africa will be seeking allies for its

ambition that successful UN reform should provide it with a newly created permanent seat for Africa.

Other areas of co-operation included the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), in which Turkey has had a very active and dedicated representative, Professor F Acar. Although Turkish women have had equality in many fields as a result of Ataturk's reforms in the 1920s, much still needs to be done, and many leading Turkish women are engaged with this issue.

Mutual support of candidates for election to positions in international organisations is also regularly sought.

At the regional level, the Turkish ambassador is accredited to several of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, while there is increasing interest in South Africa for associate membership of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation. This provides another area of common interest.

Economic Issues

Bilateral trade

Bilateral trade has long been skewed in South Africa's favour, as illustrated by the tables below.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SA exports	210	278	488	400	685	345	207	328
SA imports	66	71	73	59	70	78	85	121
Total trade	276	349	561	459	755	423	292	449
Trade surplus	144	207	415	341	617	267	122	207

	January–November 2003	January–November 2004
Exports from SA to Turkey	293 (210+83 gold)	871 (267+604 gold)
Exports from Turkey to SA	110	168 million
Total trade	403 million	1,039 billion

- **SA exports, including gold, to Turkey increased by 197%** in the period January–November 2004, compared to the same period in 2003, and reached \$871 million (R5.3 billion). South Africa's exports during the same period of 2003 were \$293 million (R1.8 billion).

- **SA exports to Turkey, excluding gold, were \$267 million (R1.6 billion)** in the period January–November 2004, having **increased by 27%** over the same period in 2003, when they totalled \$210 million (R1.3 billion).

- **SA exports of gold to Turkey were \$604 million (R3.7 billion)** in the period January–November 2004 and **increased by 628%** as compared to the same period in 2003, when they totalled \$83 million (R502 million). Turkey's total gold imports in 2004 were 251 tons, with a value of \$3.5 billion. The largest importer of gold was Koc Bank, with over 100 tons. The other top importers were Rona Doviz, Meydan Doviz, İş Bank and Anadolu Doviz.

- **Turkish exports to South Africa totalled \$168 million (R1.0 billion)** in the period January–November 2004 and **increased by 53%** as compared to the same period in 2003, when they totalled \$110 million (R666 million).

Exchange rate: \$1 = R6-05.

Source: Trade Section, South African Embassy, Ankara, *Monthly Economic Status Report for Turkey*, December 2004.

The main products³⁷ traded between South Africa and Turkey in 2003 were the following:

Table 4: Top 15 Turkish imports from SA, 2003		
<i>HS code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
27011290	Bituminous coal	121,722,834
71081200	Gold	95,878,318
84219900	Filtering and purifying machinery for gases	12,659,633
87089998	Automotive spare parts (exhaust silencers and pipes, radiators, brake drums and linings, suspension shock absorbers)	9,342,503
26219000	Ores and concentrates (iron ores, chrome ores, titanium ores)	8,784,033
72011090	Pig iron	8,351,343
41079910	Leather hides and skins	7,932,557
72021180	Ferro-manganese	5,348,568
71069110	Silver	5,303,443
68139090	Articles of stone and plaster (friction materials, fabricated asbestos fibres)	4,901,399
29343090	Organic chemicals (acetone, propyl alcohol, butanols, butanone, ethyl acetates)	4,556,346
85451100	Electrodes	4,279,370
72083990	Iron and steel plate rolled products	3,354,259
51129010	Wool	3,344,488
72193510	Stainless steel sheets and plates	3,260,977
	Total, including other products not listed	328,255,210
Source: Turkish Institute of Statistics figures, extracted by Trade Section, South African Embassy, Ankara		

³⁷ A list of all the products is given in Attachment 3.

Table 5: Top 18 Turkish exports to SA, 2003

<i>HS code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
48239090	Articles of paper, pulp and paper board (nappies, sanitary towels, tampons)	20,292,946
87169090	Automotive and spare parts (accessories of vehicle bodies, road wheels, clutches, etc.), tractors and spare parts, chassis, cars, commercial vehicles, brake drums, disk brakes	17,449,185
84859080	Machinery (washing machines, dishwashers, engine parts, etc.)	11,589,991
55164300	Textiles of staple fibres	10,379,985
54083400	Textiles of synthetic filaments	6,074,175
85469090	Electrical, electronics (small electrical home appliances: heaters, ovens, vacuum cleaners), insulated wires, cables and conductors, telephone switchboards, electric motors	5,431,890
58109990	Special woven fabrics (trimmings, embroidery, lace, etc.)	4,901,748
40169988	Rubber and articles (bus and automobile tyres)	4,755,799
73121086	Iron and steel wires, cables	3,481,424
63080000	Home textiles (curtains, blankets, towels, tablecloths, etc.)	3,257,307
68151090	Articles of stone, plaster (marble)	3,112,007
24013000	Tobacco	2,041,234
28401100	Inorganic chemicals	1,796,451
52114990	Cotton textiles (yarn and fabrics)	1,700,714
71179000	Gold jewellery	1,370,768
7	Dried tomatoes	1,236,699
59119010	Industrial textiles	1,213,521
20089955	Processed and packed fruits and vegetables	1,196,285
	Total, including products not individually listed	121,288,132
Source: Turkish Institute of Statistics figures, extracted by Trade Section, South African Embassy, Ankara		

Coal

Unlike many of its neighbours to the east, Turkey suffers a major energy deficit. Its only major local source of energy is poor-quality brown coal, mined at Zonguldak on the Black Sea coast and in

several other areas in the interior. As a country at the fortieth degree of latitude, which has a high central plateau and a mountainous eastern region, it suffers extremes of climate. Winters are intensely cold and home heating is essential. The use of brown coal for heating and cooking caused cities like the capital, Ankara (population 3 million plus) to be blanketed in unhealthy smog for months at a time.

One of the solutions was to import hard coal with lower particle omission. The choice fell on South Africa as the source. A trading company owned by the city of Ankara, Bel-Ko, and a state-owned bank, Vakif Bank, set up Sumo Collieries (Pty) Ltd in South Africa in 1995 and purchased coal mines in Witbank and Ermelo to supply coal in the 'briquet' size required for domestic use by the city and for onward distribution to households. In spite of the privatisation of ownership in 2003, Sumo still exists as a Turkish direct investment in South Africa, exporting 45% of its production via Durban and Maputo to Turkey.³⁸

Importation takes place through the eastern Mediterranean port of Iskenderun, from where it was railed to Ankara. The environmental impact was dramatic and the air quality in cities such as Ankara, Istanbul and Bursa that use South African coal improved visibly.

There were signs that the pre-1994 South African government was prepared to promote such exports by assistance with the construction of a dedicated coal port east of Iskenderun, at Yumurtalik. This project never came to fruition in the new political environment.

Several private companies, based mainly in Istanbul, also imported coal from South Africa and supplied another industrial city with

³⁸ Information provided telephonically by A Tanar Kacar, general manager, Sumo Colliery SA (Pty) Ltd.

severe air pollution, Bursa, until political pressure forced usage back to local coal. Cheaper and closer sources, such as Russia, and the increasing use of gas imported from Russia and countries to the east largely pushed South African coal off the market in the early 2000s.

In 2004, the need for cement for reconstruction in Iraq brought about another change as the demand for hard coal increased beyond the ability of other sources to supply, and coal again became South Africa's biggest export to Turkey. This is likely to increase even further in 2006, when a coal-fired power station is due to come on stream in Iskenderun. The station is scheduled to receive 50% of its steaming coal from South Africa. The problem may in fact be to meet the demand that is already exceeding the ability to supply.

Major civil engineering contracts

Turkey is a country of engineers and spectacular engineering projects. The previous president, Süleyman Demirel, was an engineer. One of the world's largest irrigation projects, the South-East Anatolia Project, known by its Turkish acronym as the GAP Project, involves the construction of 22 dams on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which have their headwaters in the mountains of Eastern Anatolia. In addition, a network of gas pipelines is being constructed across the country to deal with energy demand.

South Africa also has a strong civil engineering tradition and a history of successful large dam and irrigation projects. It seemed that there would be scope for South African companies in Turkey at a time when the amount of work in South Africa had decreased.

In fact, the record has been mixed. A project to supply steel pipes and install them as part of the gas network failed at an advanced stage when the world price of steel, in which the South African raw material is priced, increased to such a level that the South African contractor was priced out of the market.

Much construction in Turkey is done with concrete. After the disastrous August 1999 Marmara earthquake, Turkish investors were prepared to look favourably on a proposal to construct a 'motor city' project in Istanbul using South African steel fabrication sections. Although the project was launched in the presence of the Turkish president, it subsequently emerged that the financing arrangements were dodgy, and the developer, a prominent businessman, bank owner and media proprietor, was jailed before the project was completed.

An international consulting engineering firm with a South African branch requested support from the embassy to acquire work for its South African partners and suppliers of equipment for the downstream water reticulation works for irrigation of agricultural as part of the GAP Project in northern Mesopotamia, the 'fertile crescent'.

Although there was interest at the Directorate of Water Works (DSI) of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the initiative coincided with a major financial crisis in Turkey, which the IMF and the World Bank were called in to help resolve. Not only was state spending severely restricted, but cosy tender practices that had long been applied were also stopped. In fact, the minister was dismissed from office and several officials working on unrelated energy projects were jailed. Nothing came of the initiative.

Perhaps the biggest projects in which South African contactors might have wished to tender, at least in part, was when work on the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline to transport Caspian oil to the Mediterranean was put out to tender. But the documents reached the South African Embassy under a diplomatic note two days before the closing date. Obviously this was another sweetheart deal and the call for tenders was no more than a means to give it an aura of respectability.

All was not bleak, however. A thermal power station was to be constructed by Siemens of Germany on the BOT (build-operate-transfer) basis much favoured by Turkey. Situated at Iskenderun at the south-eastern end of the Mediterranean, the specifications called for a boiler manufactured by Steinmuller. The company manufactured these boilers at their plant in South Africa and a successful project worth \$150 million to South Africa in exports to Turkey was successfully completed.

Turkey remains a promising and lucrative market for South African manufactures, but the unfamiliarity of South African and Turkish business with each other and with the respective business cultures makes the exploitation of the opportunities difficult.

Assistance in the promotion of trade

Both the Turkish Embassy in Pretoria and the South African Embassy in Ankara have active and engaged Trade Sections that attempt to assist business in identifying opportunities and dealing with the processes involved.

The embassy in Ankara has taken part in the annual Izmir International Trade Fair for many years, a role it took over from the consulate in Istanbul when the latter was closed in 1996. More than a million visitors attend the fair each year.

Likewise, the embassy participates in a series of specialist fairs, such as agricultural fairs, in Konya, Bursa and Ankara, where attendees have been impressed by the advanced nature of South Africa's commercial agriculture and agricultural research. Ostriches and ostrich-breeding technology have been a particular success.

Small business people from South Africa annually participate in the annual fair arranged by MUSIAD, the organisation of Muslim business people. Their participation is assisted financially by the

South African DTI, one of the few instances in which it promotes trade with Turkey.

Another is assistance given to craft manufacturers and exporters to participate in the popular craft fairs. Their lack of sophistication places a heavy burden on the Trade Section of the embassy to facilitate the entry of their goods and to assist them in their activities. Recently Turkey has substantially reduced the duty on imported wines, making it possible for South African wines to enter the Turkish market. Already significant deals have been concluded.

The Turks began early to recognise South Africa as an untapped export market. In February 1999, a trade delegation to South Africa was led by the state minister responsible for foreign trade, Tunca Toskay. Several similar delegations have since visited South Africa, including ones led in various capacities by Kürşat Tuzmen.

In addition, organisations such as the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce; the Aegean Chamber of Industries; ISHAD and its local associates, such as the Marmara Federation of Business Life Associations, MARIFED, which visited South Africa in February 2005; arrange trade missions or participation in South Africa fairs, such as SAITEX. In addition, the Turkish Foreign Trade Board, DEIK, arranges business seminars.

In 2004, the premier of the Western Cape, Ebrahim Rasool, led a trade delegation to Turkey, including business people who participated in the MUSIAD fair in Istanbul. The Muslim connection of nearly 150 years ago was starting to revive.

To celebrate ten years of democracy in South Africa, the embassy in Ankara organised a trade and tourism fair in Istanbul in April 2004. South African firms were invited and encouraged to participate, but participation was rather disappointing.

The lack of knowledge of the Turkish market, and therefore the relative lack of interest, by South African business people was and remains one of the main problems in developing the trade relationship to its full potential. Trade missions by mainline chambers of commerce, such as that led by Trevor Sinclair of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) in October 1998, remain the exception. All this in spite of the fact that at least one South African bank, Standard Bank, has a representative office in Istanbul and that ABSA Bank has participated in the financing of capital projects.

The visit by Deputy President Zuma in October 2003 and the reciprocal visit by the Turkish prime minister in 2005, each accompanied by business delegations, may mark a turning point in trade relations. Again, it is to be hoped that the profile of Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit, the powerful and large delegation that will accompany him, and the business summit to be staged in Cape Town will contribute to greater awareness of the potential Turkey has as a trading and investment partner for South African business. This will undoubtedly strengthen the trading relationship which sees nearly 600 Turkish companies already importing goods from South Africa.

The year 2005 promises to be a busy year in regard to trade, as the Turkish economy is growing rapidly and South Africa is experiencing a consumer boom. Turkey has to do its utmost to deal with a negative balance of trade, which, in the case of trade with South Africa, in the first 11 months of 2004 was approximately 5:1 in South Africa's favour.

Promotion of foreign direct investment by Anatolian Tigers

The term Anatolian Tigers is applied to successful industrialists and business people from the smaller cities in Asian Turkey, very often

devout Muslims, who are to some degree at odds with the secular establishment in Ankara.

One of the ironies of the governments formed by secularist political parties in Turkey between 1983 and 2002 is that they simultaneously promoted a privatised economy, starting under the leadership of Prime Minister Turgut Ozal in 1983, which moved away from Ataturk's 1920s statist economic model, and at the same time alienated these Muslim business people who consequently flourish in the smaller cities of Anatolia. A typical example of this policy is the treatment meted out to the city of Konya, the sixth-largest in Turkey, a successful industrial and commercial centre, but also religiously conservative and the home of the 'whirling dervishes'. In spite of its obvious success, the city was until recently denied a civilian airport, which almost every other city in Turkey has. Instead, commercial flights were required to use the local military airport, as if to emphasize who was in control.

The reaction to this active official neglect was the establishment of a network of business chambers in parallel to the state-administered chambers of commerce. Identified by the suffix 'siad', they united a dedicated group of business people with an unspoken grudge against the central authorities. Their members looked for investment opportunities abroad and made full use of the freedom from exchange controls to move their capital abroad — to the benefit of investment destinations there, among them South Africa.

Provincial governors, the representatives of central authority in all of Turkey's 70 provinces, including Ankara itself and Istanbul, differed in their attitude, but in successful cities, such as Gaziantep, there was no discrimination against Islamist business organisations — uniting the multiple parties into a winning team.

The South African Embassy was one of the first to buy into this network, centrally regulated by ISHAD, the Business Life Support

Association, in Istanbul. ISHAD directly and indirectly created opportunities in conjunction, in some cases, with local chambers of industry and commerce for teams from the embassy to meet and address groups of business people; pay courtesy visits to the governor and the mayor; and to receive local TV, radio and print media publicity. The team has usually consisted of the ambassador, who gives a general introductory overview, the first secretary, the relevant honorary consul, who comments from the perspective of a local business person, and the embassy trade secretary/trade and information assistant, who acts as interpreter and who also provides detailed technical information on customs duties, requirements for setting up companies in South Africa, incentives and any other information in response to questions from the floor.

These sessions, held in many cities all over Turkey, draw from 80 to 150 local business people on each occasion.

Besides raising the profile of South Africa, and of the other countries that used the opportunity, these meetings generated interest in direct Turkish industrial investment in South Africa. Typical of the investments that resulted was the establishment of a blanket manufacturing plant on the Rand by an entrepreneur from the small western Turkish industrial centre of Uşak.

The reciprocal benefit received was recognised at a dinner hosted in honour of the participating ambassadors at the Çıran Palace Hotel, the most luxurious in Istanbul, in December 2000. It was attended by 900 business people, including some of the most prominent in Turkey. The South African ambassador was invited to make the main address on behalf of his diplomatic colleagues.

Turkish investment in Africa and South Africa

Turkish investors, unlike those from North America and Western Europe, tend to be family concerns rather than large corporations.

They are also less risk averse. The result is that many Turkish enterprises have been established in African countries that are barely noticed by other foreign investors.

South Africa has been the beneficiary of this willingness to invest. The first industrial investment, with a South African partner, was the erection of a curtain and machine lace factory at Centurion by the conglomerate Zorlu Holding. Trading under the name of Cortex, the floor space of the factory was almost doubled to 25,000 sq metres within a year.

Other investments have included an electrical appliance factory at Atlantis in the Western Cape using the brand name Conti; blanket finishing and weaving plants owned by Ahlesa; Uludag, a company from Bursa; and Sesli, with origins in Usak, based at Crown Mines.

Currently, there are no less than 49 known Turkish-owned businesses in the manufacturing, retail, import and services sectors in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. This probably understates the true number.

Turkish–South African Business Council

The Turkish Foreign Trade Board, known by its Turkish acronym, DEIK, initiated negotiations with the *Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut* (AHI) as a South African partner, to establish a Turkish–South African Business Council. It hosts such councils with many of Turkey’s trading partners.

The agreement creating the council was signed at DEIK’s head office in Istanbul in 1999 by Necdet Çolpan, chairman of the Turkish chapter and Johann de Bruyn of AHI, secretary of the South African chapter. The South African ambassador and the honorary consul in Istanbul, Ishak Alaton, were in attendance.

The South African chapter appointed the former ambassador to Turkey, Riaan Eksteen, as chairman. The members tended to be local Turkish-owned businesses, which derived benefit from the ability of the AHI to speak on their behalf.

Because of changes in the structure of organised commerce and industry in South Africa and other more urgent priorities in Turkey, the Business Council chapters have largely become inactive, but plans are afoot to relaunch the South African chapter on a sounder basis under the aegis of CHAMSA. Increased mutual awareness between the business communities will enhance its prospects of success.

Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement

The Turkish authorities are eager to conclude a trade agreement with South Africa, styled a Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (TECA). Negotiations have continued from 1998, but after each negotiating session, usually linked to a high-level visit, the momentum in Pretoria has usually dissipated immediately after the visit.

While there is an expectation that the agreement will be signed during the visit of the Turkish prime minister to South Africa in March 2005, Peter Draper, a former DTI head of economic analysis and research in the trade policy division, and currently head of SAIIA's Development through Trade project, informed the author that, to his knowledge, no priority was being given to the conclusion of a free trade agreement (FTA) with Turkey. He conceded that the signature of what he described as a 'mother-love' agreement, into which category the existing draft may fall, is possible.³⁹

³⁹ E-mails to the author dated 4 and 5 October 2004.

Considerations are that South African negotiating capacity does not exist to undertake another FTA negotiation, especially if Turkey is to join the EU, in which case the trade agreement between South Africa and the EU will automatically apply to Turkey.

Concern from the Turkish side is based on the fact that Turkey has decided to apply duty exemptions/deductions on certain goods to the 'developing countries' under the Generalised System of Preferences. South Africa is considered to be a 'developing country'. This is a unilateral decision, which Turkey took on 21 September 2004 in the process of aligning its customs duties with those of the EU. Turkey will now increase pressure on South Africa on the FTA issue, as it is adversely affected by the one-sided duty exemptions, especially given the lop-sided trade balance in South Africa's favour.

This will probably be a topic on the agenda of the delegation to South Africa led by the Turkish prime minister in March 2005.

Promotion of tourism

The promotion of tourism forms a natural adjunct to both trade promotion and image building.

Several factors initially facilitated this activity by both the consulate-general in Istanbul and later the embassy in Ankara:

- Direct flights by Turkish Airlines were initiated in 1996, an indication in itself that the potential tourist market in both countries had been recognised.
- Increasing wealth and the ability in both countries to travel to exotic destinations positively affected tourism. South Africa was seen as such an exotic, yet sufficiently developed, destination. The fact that South Africa has casinos, banned in Turkey in 1997, added to the allure and ensured their inclusion in any Turkish group's itinerary.

- The introduction of cable TV with its documentaries on African wildlife and new destinations made Turks aware of new, less expensive destinations, rather than the by then hackneyed shopping expeditions to Western Europe or North America.
- The absence of a visa requirement for Turks who wish to visit South Africa for less than 30 days for tourist or business purposes made travel easier.

Countries in the developed world usually have onerous requirements for the issue of visas to Turks and the fact that South Africa requires no visa sends a very positive message to potential Turkish visitors.

Regrettably, Turkey introduced visas for South Africans in July 2003, with particularly onerous supporting documentary requirements, not unlike those of the former Soviet republics of Central Asia.⁴⁰ Requirements for South Africans have presumably been brought into line with the more restrictive policy applied to citizens of other sub-Saharan countries. Fortunately, South Africa has not reciprocated.

Until SATOUR, subsequently SA Tourism, revised its policy and downgraded its promotional activities in the Eastern Mediterranean/Middle East region, the South African missions worked closely with the SATOUR representative in Tel Aviv in promotional activities. Most important of these were participation in the annual Eastern Mediterranean International Tourism Trade (EMITT) exhibition in Istanbul.

Even after the withdrawal of the tourism agency and of Turkish Airlines flights, the embassy's participation has continued and adds to the profile of South Africa among an important segment of the Turkish business community and the upper strata of society.

⁴⁰ <http://www.turkishembassy.co.za>.

The Embassy arranged a stand at the major annual tourism trade show, EMITT, in Istanbul in February 2005. Eleven South African private tourism companies accepted the Embassy's invitation to be represented on the South African stand and expressed themselves satisfied with the business relationships they had established. The organisers presented the Embassy with the award for the Best Organised Stand. It received significant media attention when Leila Alaton, the prominent daughter of the South African Honorary Consul-General, Ishak Alaton, was observed talking to the Turkish Minister of Tourism at the stand.⁴¹

It is to be hoped that the flights by Turkish Airlines will be resumed in 2005, following the visit of the Turkish prime minister to South Africa and the sharp increase in the value of the rand. Reconsideration by Turkey of its visa requirements would also have a positive impact.

It is regrettable that SATourism refuses to change its negative attitude to promoting tourism from Turkey. It seems as perverse of them to spend all their budget on markets that are already well established and disdainfully turn their back on new markets which have the potential that the increasingly wealthy Turkish outward-bound market has.

Other Issues

Opening of Fettulahcilar Schools in South Africa

As part of his secularisation of Turkish society, Ataturk banned Muslim religious sects or brotherhoods. In spite of this, several still exist and flourish, often playing an important, if disguised, political role. The Nakshibendis provided support for the Motherland Party

⁴¹ Information supplied telephonically by Mone Dye and Güven Tok of the Embassy in Ankara, 1 March 2005.

of reformist Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, a member, and his successors, such as Mesut Yilmaz.

One of the most successful sects are the Nurcus, named after their founder, Said-I Nursi, who taught that it was possible to be a good Muslim and a follower of secular sciences at the same time.

His most prominent follower, Fethullah Gulen, created boarding facilities and later preparatory schools of high quality for disadvantaged boys. It was alleged by the military and secularist prosecutors that these hostels were used to proselytise the boys in a moderate, non-violent, but insidious form of Islam. The objective, it was alleged, was to infiltrate the state system, in particular the security apparatus, in order to undermine secularism from the inside.

By the late 1990s, the Fethullahcilar, as followers of Gulen are known, controlled a university of academic standing in Istanbul, business organisations such as ISHAD, a major newspaper, financial institutions specialising in Islamic banking and, in addition to those in Turkey, established schools in Central Asia, other countries of the former Soviet Union and in countries around the world. Three such schools, two in Johannesburg and one in Cape Town, were established in South Africa, providing quality education in mathematics and science, computer studies and Turkish, while not attracting attention to themselves. Of these, at least one still exists.

Ironically, while the educational activities of the Fethullahcilar were officially frowned upon in Turkey, abroad they were considered by their embassies as part of the Turkish cultural outreach.⁴²

⁴² Shankland D, *Islam and Turkish Society*. Huntingdon: Eothen Press, 1999, pp.68–74, 81–4.

2004 Olympic bid and 2006 Soccer World Cup bid

Turkey is a member of both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and FIFA, the world football governing body. During South Africa's bid for the 2004 Olympic Games, in my capacity as South African ambassador to Turkey, I called on Sinan Erdem, the Turkish member of the IOC, who had recently been a guest of the South African Olympic Committee, to examine the suitability of Cape Town as an Olympic venue. In response to my statement that it was Africa's turn to host the Olympics, Erdem's almost pained response was, 'But Mr Wheeler, Cape Town is not Africa!' He was not prepared to show his hand, but his response was interpreted as being negative.

The situation was complicated by the fact that by law, Istanbul is required to make a bid to host every Olympic Games. These bids were not regarded by those outside Turkey as serious, because of the traffic problems of Istanbul and its lack of stadiums and other facilities.

South Africa missed an opportunity when Danny Jordaan of the South African Football Association (SAFA) did not catch the flight from London to Istanbul to meet the Turkish member of FIFA and lobby South Africa's case to hold the 2006 World Cup.

The first secretary at the South African Embassy, an avid soccer fan known as Shoes Mtilwa, subsequently called in the assistance of several of the South African soccer players at Turkish clubs, such as Shoes Moshoe, to create opportunities to promote the bid.

In the end, neither South African bid succeeded. The Olympics went to Greece and the 2006 World Cup to Germany in controversial circumstances.

Recent Developments Affecting Turkey And Turkish–South African Relations

Turkey since 1999 as it approached the negotiations for EU membership

The year 1999 will be seen as a major turning point in contemporary Turkish history. A series of pivotal events took place that positioned Turkey better for its bid to become a member of the EU. These were:

- the events surrounding the capture and trial of Abdullah Öcalan;
- the general election of 18 April;
- the earthquakes of August and October 1999 and their political effect;
- the visit to Turkey of President Bill Clinton of the USA;
- the collapse of the economy and the IMF rescue package; and
- the acceptance by the EU at Helsinki of Turkey as a candidate for membership.⁴³

The circumstances and consequences of the arrest and conviction of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the Kurdish PKK insurgency, have been dealt with under the Kurdish issue above.

The election of 18 April 1999 brought to power a Left–Right coalition government that was prepared to put measures before parliament to start the process of reform in many sectors that Turkey had long needed, but would also have to adopted if there was to be any hope for its bid for EU membership.

The earthquakes had consequences that were much wider than the severe loss of life and physical destruction they caused.

⁴³ http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/index_en.htm.

Internally, they caused Turks to question the notion of the 'Father State' that knew what was good for them and would care for them. Because the state failed them in their hour of need, a new willingness emerged to question state authority and even to debate the merits of issues such as human rights and the position of the Kurds.

Instead of the Turkish state, the international community, which Turks had long been conditioned to mistrust, rushed to their aid. Foremost, ironically, were their neighbours and supposed long-time enemies, the Greeks. South Africa and 84 other countries, including many from the so-called Christian West, as well as organisations around the world, rushed to Turkey's aid as well.

South African voluntary rescue organisations sent a search and rescue team, including sniffer dogs, within days of the first earthquake. The South African government made a contribution to the UN fund for its relief effort. This gesture led to an invitation to the South African ambassador, the only representative of a developing country, to attend a briefing by the head of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Carol Bellamy, when she visited Ankara shortly after the earthquake. South Africa's gesture was not overlooked by the Turkish authorities and was recognised when silver plaques expressing the gratitude of Turkey were later handed by the foreign minister to representatives of donor countries. The supposed hostility of South Africa had been exposed as a myth.

The earthquake hastened the need for Turkey to appeal to the international financial institutions for assistance. For 25 years, populist economic policies and unwillingness to impose fiscal restraint on military spending while the insurgency in the Kurdish south-east had to be countered and on other unsustainable spending, such as featherbedding of the civil service by the parties in each succeeding coalition government, together with the consequences for Turkey of the 1998 financial crisis in Russia,

hastened the inevitable crisis. The unchecked 100% annual inflation could no longer be sustained, especially when the country had to be rebuilt after the earthquake.

Turkey's plight gave the IMF and the World Bank strong leverage to demand fiscal discipline and monetary reform, including better surveillance of the banks, effective tax collection, and transparency in public tenders and purchasing.

The work of the Turkish authorities and the conditions agreed to for stand-by loans from the international financial institutions brought their most visible success on 1 January 2005, when new lira currency notes were brought into circulation. The TL1 million note had six zeros removed and became one new lira (YTL), at an exchange rate of \$1 = YTL1.4, up from TL 1.6 (million) a year earlier. Inflation was reduced to a 30-year low of 9.2% in December, with a target of 8% by the end of 2005.⁴⁴

Turkey has had an association agreement with the EU and its predecessors since 1963. When Europe offered Turkey the opportunity to join in 1974, the then prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, refused mainly because of the loss of sovereignty Turkey would have to accept through joining the supra-national union.

Once Greece joined the EU, it vetoed any attempt to grant Turkey candidacy rights, until December 1999, after the earthquake. The Greeks withdrew their objection at an EU meeting at which Turkish candidacy was discussed and those in Europe who opposed Turkish membership had to find other pretexts for doing so.

The moral support and encouragement given by President Bill Clinton during his extensive state visit to Turkey in the latter half of 1999 also had a positive and lightening effect on the national mood.

⁴⁴ Central Bank of Turkey, quoted in *Briefing*, 1529, 10–24 January 2005, p.15.

Meanwhile, reform was continuing in Turkey, but slowing as the coalition lost steam.

Leaders of the judiciary began to call openly for the reform of the Turkish Constitution, which had been imposed by the military after the 1980 coup. Its restrictive provisions and the supreme role assigned to the military were not in accord with liberal democratic principles it claimed to entrench, nor could they remain if Turkey was serious about entering the EU.

In 2000, when the parties in parliament could not agree on a successor for President Demirel, the president of the Constitutional Court, Judge Ahmed Necdet Sezer, was elected as a compromise candidate. A Kemalist secularist, a stickler for observance of the law and an opponent of status seeking and corruption, he soon found himself in conflict with the political leadership when he used his powers to veto legislation that he considered contrary to centralist Kemalist principles, anti-democratic or less than ethical. Nevertheless, the effect of his actions was generally perceived as promoting reform and democratic governance.

In the general election of November 2002, the secularist political parties were hoist with their own petard. A provision in the electoral legislation intended to keep Kurdish and other minor parties out of parliament by requiring them to achieve 10% of the vote nation-wide resulted in only three parties gaining representation in parliament. Two had not been tainted by participation in government in recent years and could not be held responsible by the electorate for the hardship brought on the people by the economic problems, cronyism and poor governance of the previous 15 or more years.

Ironically, the winners were a new, untried and untainted moderate Islamist party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), headed by the popular former mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Through the vagaries of the electoral system, the AKP won a two-

thirds majority, with only the socialist statist party of Ataturk, the Republic People's Party (CHP), as the main opposition in parliament. It had also not been a part of government coalitions and had remained untainted in the eyes of the voters. The remaining members were a small group from the True Path Party (DYP), standing as independents.

This overwhelming majority enabled the AKP to introduce and pass long-delayed legislation to reform and modernise both the family code, to give equality to women, and the penal code, as well as granting authority for Kurdish language broadcasts on the state-owned media and the teaching of Kurdish in private schools. In addition, the role and influence of the military in the State Security Council was reduced by providing that a civilian should occupy the powerful position of secretary-general instead of a military officer, as had been the case.

While it seems ironic that an Islamist government should carry out these reforms, it had several advantages for them. By pursuing Ataturk's dictum of a Western vocation for Turkey, rather than the blatantly Islamist eastward-looking agendas of previous religiously-orientated governments, the AKP denied the military the pretext for acting to remove it, as had been the fate of previous such governments. In addition, it guided through parliament reforms moving the country ever closer to compliance with the EU's Copenhagen Criteria for membership by candidate countries.⁴⁵

The two-fold meaning of what had happened was that the military, which has a constitutionally defined role of protecting secularism and Kemalist principles, has acquiesced in moves by parliament to reduce the former's political oversight role, and Turkey has moved under Islamist guidance closer to the value system that underpins the EU.

⁴⁵ <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/enlargement.htm>.

One of the consequences was less pleasing to Turkey's long-time ally, the US. When called upon to endorse the use of Turkish soil for the launch of a coalition attack on Iraq from the north in 2004, the democratically elected Turkish parliament, demurred. This denied the US and Britain a second front for access to Iraq. Once again, democracy cannot be relied upon to deliver the results the advocates of freedom find most convenient for themselves.

In order to deal with the distance that developments connected with Iraq, especially those of the Iraqi Kurds, have placed between Turkey and the US, and the uncertainty that remains about when, and even if, Turkey will be accepted as a member of the EU, the government of Prime Minister Erdoğan has been pursuing what may be called a 'regional foreign policy'.

President Putin of Russia has visited Ankara recently, and Erdoğan almost immediately reciprocated the visit. Agreements on trade and energy co-operation have been signed.

Fence-mending with near neighbours — Syria, Greece, Bulgaria and even Iran — continue, and Erdoğan sees a role for Turkey in the achievement of peace in the Middle East. Having good relations with both the Arab nations and Israel, Turkey is well placed to play such a role.

Although Turkey is proud of the fact that a Turkish general, Cevik Bir, commanded the UN troops in Somalia, it has adopted a more narrowly regional approach to peacekeeping in the Balkans, and currently Turkey is commanding, for the second time, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

It is almost as though Turkey is following the advice offered it by Professor Gerrit Olivier when speaking at an international conference on Atatürk and the Modern World, held in Ankara on 22–23 October 1998. In his address, 'The relevance of Kemal Atatürk in

the Turkey of the future', he suggested that, given its future geo-strategic role, Turkey should become a 'bridgebuilder' between nations and cultures.⁴⁶ This is a role often attributed to South Africa following its progression to democracy in 1994.⁴⁷

The admission in 2004 of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU has given its Greek Cypriot government, demonstrably hostile as it is to Ankara, a veto over Turkey's admission to the EU. While the Erdoğan government has displayed moderation in the way it has been handling the issue of Cyprus, it will continue to need wisdom and political acumen to navigate the rocks that block Turkey's route to EU membership, presented by the intransigent attitudes of a range of the key players in the unfolding process.

Assessment of Future Turkish–South African Relations

In the many ways illustrated above, Turkey and South Africa occupy similar or parallel positions in the world and in world affairs. Their attitudes to world issues tend to correspond.

Trade relations are expanding and both countries are being accorded recognition for their sound economic policies, and are recognised by the world's rating agencies and by international investors as being in a category beyond that of other emerging economies.

The doubts in South Africa about Turkey's commitment to international human and minority rights norms are being swept

⁴⁶ Olivier G, 'The relevance of Kemal Atatürk in the Turkey of the future' in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Atatürk and Modern Turkey, 22–23 October 1998*. Ankara: Ankara University Faculty of Political Science, pp.701–12.

⁴⁷ Barber J, *Mandela's World*. Cape Town/Athens/Oxford: James Currey, 2004; Adams H & K Moodley, *The Negotiated Revolution: Society and Politics in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1993.

away by the actions of recent Turkish governments, and especially by the Erdoğan government.

Despite the physical distance between the two countries, they therefore offer each other much. These benefits, however, remain to be fully developed and exploited.

There is a great dearth of knowledge among the people about each other's countries. This places a heavy burden on the respective embassies who have to be not only the committed and dynamic proponents of greater interaction in all fields of endeavour, but in the absence very often of interest and knowledge by other potential roll-players in their home countries, also the drivers of the process through public diplomacy to raise the profile of the countries they represent. The constraints remain resources, human and financial. But photographs such as that published recently in the Turkish national media of Ambassador Mngqikana singing on stage with Consul-General Alaton dancing in the background are important contributions to the consciousness-raising. To the local citizenry in countries where South Africa, for instance, does not have large and established interests, the Ambassador is the country. South African representatives in Turkey have all long realised this and ambassadors, consuls-generals and their staff members have seen that the public profile of South Africa remains high – to the extent that the South African embassy in Ankara has been described as 'the most active small embassy in Turkey'. But more is needed from both countries' missions and by those at home who support them.

The visit of Deputy President Zuma and his delegation brought home to South African political and business leaders the potential Turkey has to aid in achieving the objectives of the African Renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) in a practical and unthreatening, but mutually beneficial, way. A new political will and interest in developing positive relations at all levels seems be developing in South Africa.

Likewise, the visit of Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2005 will dispel for him and the members of his delegation — including over 100 business people — any remaining illusions that South Africa is just another remote, poverty-stricken, developing country at the furthest end of the African continent.

Since formal ties were established over a decade ago, relations have gone through much rough water. Hopes of promised improvement have been dashed sometimes by perceived slight, or simply indifference, and sometimes by almost inexplicable hostility. Point scoring through the media has often negated the efforts of those working to move the relationship forward.

The time for these inhibitions to the growth of an important relationship has passed. With the goodwill generated by the exchange of visits and the political endorsement they represent, the opportunity is presented to South Africans and Turks in all fields of endeavour to get to know and appreciate each other. If it is grasped and exploited to the full, it will be to the advantage of both countries and their peoples.

May the relations between South Africa and Turkey go from strength to strength!

Attachments

Attachment 1: Treaties between South Africa and Turkey⁴⁸

<i>Date signed</i>	<i>Title</i>
24-07-1923	Treaty of Lausanne between the British Empire, the French Republic, etc., and the Republic of Turkey. Signed by Britain on behalf of the British Empire and ratified by the Union of South Africa on 23 October 1923
12-10-1992	Exchange of notes to establish diplomatic relations
23-01-1998	Air Transport Agreement
23-06-2000	Agreement Concerning the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments
23-06-2000	Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Tourism
23-06-2000	Protocol on Consultation
14.10.2003	Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Education, Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs
14-10-2004	Police Co-operation Agreement

Attachment 2: South African and Turkish heads of mission

<i>South Africa</i>		<i>Turkey</i>	
<i>Ambassador</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Ambassador</i>	<i>Date</i>
CF Jacobs	01.03.1993–30.11.1994	Sami C Onaran	01.03.1994–29.11.1995
JA Eksteen	10.02.1995–31.05.1997	Kutlu Özgüvenç	30.11.1995–21.03.1998
TF Wheeler	07.06.1997–07.07.2001	M Burhan Ant	01.04.1998–17.06.2000
LMS Mngqikana	01.11.2001 to date	Sermet S Atacanli	07.07.2000–01.03.2003
		Ferhat Ataman	01.11.2003 to date
<i>Istanbul</i>		<i>Johannesburg</i>	
<i>Consul-General</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Consul-General</i>	<i>Date</i>
CF Jacobs	14.06.1991–28.02.1993	S Onaran	27..09.1991–19.04.1994
A Pelsler	01.03.1993–30.06.1995	(mission closed)	
GJ Voschenk	01.07.1995–31.12.1996	(mission closed)	

⁴⁸ Details supplied by the Treaty Section, DFA, Pretoria.

Attachment 3: Trade between South Africa and Turkey

Full lists of commodities exchanges by customs tariff classification.⁴⁹

Turkish imports from South Africa, 2003		
<i>HS Code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
27011290	Bituminous coal	121,722,834
71081200	Gold	95,878,318
84219900	Filtering and purifying machinery for gases	12,659,633
87089998	Automotive spare parts (exhaust silencers and pipes, radiators, brake drums and linings, suspension shock absorbers)	9,342,503
26219000	Ores and concentrates (iron ores, chrome ores, titanium ores)	8,784,033
72011090	Pig iron	8,351,343
41079910	Leather hides and skins	7,932,557
72021180	Ferro-manganese	5,348,568
71069110	Silver	5,303,443
68139090	Articles of stone and plaster (friction materials, fabricated asbestos fibres)	4,901,399
29343090	Organic chemicals (acetone, propyl alcohol, butanols, butanone, ethyl acetates)	4,556,346
85451100	Electrodes	4,279,370
72083990	Iron and steel plate rolled products	3,354,259
51129010	Wool	3,344,488
72193510	Stainless steel sheets and plates	3,260,977
90319080	Electrical, electronics (electrical telemeters, optical lenses and apparatus, medical equipment, metal-testing equipment)	3,195,742
84314980	Spare parts for elevators, conveyors and other heavy duty machinery	1,947,237
72139170	Hot rolled iron and steel bars and rods	1,729,088
47042900	Wood pulp	1,547,499
48239014	Paper and paper boards	1,520,836

⁴⁹ Turkish Statistics Institute, as supplied by the Trade Section, South African Embassy, Ankara.

Turkish imports from South Africa, 2003 (continued)		
<i>HS Code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
44039930	Eucalyptus	1,276,896
21069098	Food additives	1,177,120
38249099	Other chemicals (organic solvents and thinners)	1,084,267
73269097	Articles of iron and steel (construction materials)	1,045,860
23091011	Pet food	980,964
40169988	Rubber and articles thereof (outer tyres of heavy vehicles, rubber plates, sheets and strips)	943,252
25309098	Mineral products (andalusite, kyanite and silimanite, granite)	868,267
23012000	Fish flour	741,221
32159080	Tanning and dyeing extracts (tanning extracts, vegetable and synthetic origin)	695,554
33072000	Deodorants	683,344
	Moulds for metals, plastics and rubber	657,332
72022110	Ferro-silicon	636,566
39269099	Plastics and articles thereof (plastic foils, films, sheets and plates, rods and profiles, amino resins)	577,337
70195900	Glass (glass fibres, rolled or float glass sheets)	491,633
72024110	Ferro-chromium	423,586
54074200	Synthetic yarns	399,991
85426000	Circuits and micro assemblies	391,029
84099900	Engine parts	381,892
55033000	Polyester and acrylic fibres	367,026
30064000	Pharmaceuticals (toxins, medicaments, medical disposables)	359,24
52094200	Cotton yarn and fabrics	348,974
37013000	Photographic films and plates	340,623
27129099	Paraffin wax	328,283
83071090	Flexible tubing of base metals, door locks	271
75022000	Unwrought nickel	269,597
84818099	Valves	254,289
84741000	Sorting, screening machinery for metal ores	246,238
44111910	Fibre boards	219,018
20099059	Processed and packed fruits and vegetables	192,727

Turkish imports from South Africa, 2003 (continued)		
<i>HS Code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
28510080	Inorganic chemicals (nitrates, cobalt oxides and hydroxides)	186,169
85272198	Receiving apparatus for radio broadcasting	181,851
35079090	Plastic/rubber based glues and starches	171,592
72051000	Granules of pig iron or steel	162,359
84839098	Shafts and cranks	143,476
84139200	Pumps and spare parts	138,082
8094005	Fruits (hazelnuts, lemon, grapes, oranges)	133,593
	Electrical sound or visual signalling apparatus	120,673
86090090	Containers for transportation	103,441
10059000	Maize	90,495
24012090	Tobacco	77,711
74050000	Master alloys of copper, copper powder	71,334
85369010	Electrical apparatus for switching or protecting electrical circuits and parts	60,679
85166010	Cookers	53,803
85359000	Voltage apparatus	50,402
42061000	Leather articles and articles of animal gut	50,344
76169910	Aluminium cans and other articles	46,935
56039290	Non-woven fabrics	38,541
12099190	Seeds	35,164
72029930	Ferro-silico-magnesium	33,944
82121090	Hand tools	31,447
81110011	Unprocessed manganese and powders	26,394
5119990	Animal products	20,841
13023210	Vegetable extracts	20,084
	Total	328,255,210

Turkish exports to South Africa, 2003		
<i>HS Code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
48239090	Articles of paper, pulp and paper board (nappies, sanitary towels, tampons)	20,292,946
87169090	Automotive and spare parts (accessories of vehicle bodies, road wheels, clutches, etc.), tractors and spare parts, chassis, cars, commercial vehicles, brake drums, disk brakes	17,449,185
84859080	Machinery (washing machines, dishwashers, engine parts, etc.)	11,589,991
55164300	Textiles of staple fibres	10,379,985
54083400	Textiles of synthetic filaments	6,074,175
85469090	Electrical, electronics (small electrical home appliances: heaters, ovens, vacuum cleaners); insulated wires, cables and conductors, telephone switchboards, electric motors	5,431,890
58109990	Special woven fabrics (trimmings, embroidery, lace, etc.)	4,901,748
40169988	Rubber and articles (bus and automobile tyres)	4,755,799
73121086	Iron and steel wires, cables	3,481,424
63080000	Home textiles (curtains, blankets, towels, tablecloths, etc.)	3,257,307
68151090	Articles of stone, plaster (marble)	3,112,007
24013000	Tobacco	2,041,234
28401100	Inorganic chemicals	1,796,451
52114990	Cotton textiles (yarn and fabrics)	1,700,714
71179000	Gold jewellery	1,370,768
7	Dried tomatoes	1,236,699
59119010	Industrial textiles	1,213,521
20089955	Processed and packed fruits and vegetables	1,196,285
73269097	Stainless steel kitchenware	1,076,124
39269099	Plastics and articles (acrylic polymers, polypropylene sheets, polymethylene sheets, etc.)	1,051,207
73219000	Iron and steel ovens and stoves	1,050,425
8022200	Hazelnuts	1,007,275
11010015	Flour	936,068
61179000	Knitted articles of apparel and clothing	933,047
62159000	Non-knitted articles of apparel and clothing	925,935
70199099	Glass and glassware (glass kitchenware)	904,417

Turkish exports to South Africa, 2003 (continued)		
<i>HS Code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
19059060	Biscuits	889,515
32159080	Tanning and dyeing extracts	802,002
60063110	Knitted or crocheted fabrics	773,036
88033090	Aircraft	68,464
69149090	Ceramic products (tiles, sanitary ware)	665,441
25301010	Mineral products (cement, pumice stone, perlite)	663,002
72299090	Iron and steel	648,087
8131000	Dried fruits (figs, sultana raisins, apricots)	544,253
18069090	Chocolate	477,01
38160000	Other chemicals	399,513
19023090	Pasta	386,488
17049099	Chewing gums, sweets	362,797
9109999	Spices (cumin, fennel, thyme, bay leaves, anise)	359,186
94049090	Furniture	322,196
36050000	Matches	318,963
83111010	Articles of base metals (door locks)	316,898
93059900	Arms and ammunition (rifles)	316,04
73089099	Iron and steel construction materials	285,567
42050000	Articles of leather	250,698
29157030	Organic chemicals (paracetamol)	237,808
15091090	Olive oil	228,392
90328990	Miscellaneous goods (thermostats, measuring equipment)	217,236
76169990	Aluminium tubes	186,245
44219098	Wood and articles	172,794
56060099	Non-wovens, special yarns, ropes	170,114
64052091	Footwear	128,609
34059090	Soaps, washing preparations	122,894
96180000	Miscellaneous manufactures articles (brushes, smoking pipes, pencils and crayons)	119,334
74199900	Articles of copper	109,139
12079190	Poppy seed	91,861
21021031	Yeast	80,903

Turkish exports to South Africa, 2003 (continued)		
<i>HS Code 8</i>	<i>Products</i>	<i>\$</i>
51123090	Woven woollen fabrics	70,186
57050030	Carpets	49,364
7134000	Dried pulses (chickpeas, lentils)	46,958
35079090	Glues, starches	36,639
	Total	121,288,132

Media Statement on Official Visit to the Republic of South Africa by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of the Republic of Turkey

Deputy President Jacob Zuma today held discussions with his counterpart, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, in the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

Prime Minister Erdogan is the first Turkish Prime Minister to visit South Africa. This official visit is aimed at further enhancing and strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

Discussions between the two principals focused on, amongst others, the following issues:

- The consolidation and expansion of bilateral economic and political relations;
- Progress made in bilateral relations in the sectors of trade and investment, minerals and energy, defence and security co-operation, restoration of airlinks and expansion of tourism; and
- Issues of mutual concern including, the elections in Iraq, developments in the Middle East and reform of the United Nations.

Turkey has declared Africa as its priority area for 2005 and its policy, as reflected in the 1998 Action Plan of Opening up to Africa, is aimed at developing relations and enhancing co-operation with African countries in all areas including a comprehensive political dialogue and establishment of bilateral consultative mechanisms.

This visit is therefore viewed as an opportunity through which Turkey's Africa Outreach Plan can be implemented; support sought for Turkey's contribution to conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa through the continent's peace and security agenda and NEPAD as Africa's socio-economic programme.

Turkey remains interested in joint ventures with South African construction and engineering entities backed by international funding.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The two sides expressed satisfaction with the dramatic improvement in economic and trade relations especially since the last visit to Turkey by the Deputy President in 2003.

Bilateral trade expanded to over R6 billion in 2004, with South African exports of gold to Turkey exceeding R600 million.

South African exports to Turkey (including gold) increased by 205% during January-December 2004 and reached R5,6 billion. South Africa's exports during the same period in 2003 were R1,8 billion.

Turkish exports to South Africa were R1,1 billion during January-December 2004 an increase of 57% compared to the same period in 2003, during which exports were valued at R677 million.

AGREEMENTS SIGNED:

The following agreements were signed:

1. AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY REGARDING MUTUAL ASSISTANCE BETWEEN CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS

The parties agreed through their custom administration to afford each other mutual assistance:

- To ensure that the custom legislation is properly enforced;
- To prevent, investigate and combat customs offences; and
- In cases concerning the delivery of documents regarding the application of custom legislation.

The agreement seeks to supply assistance of both information and technical nature which may help to ensure proper application of customs legislation and the prevention; investigation and combating of customs offences.

In relation to persons, goods, places and means of transport, the parties agree to maintain special surveillance, and results shall be communicated to each other.

Parties agreed to permit the movement of unlawful or suspect goods out of /through/into their territories under supervision and control of competent authorities with a view to investigating and combating custom offences.

2. TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

The parties agreed to take necessary measures to facilitate and promote trade and economic relations between the two countries in accordance with the respective domestic law in force in their countries and subject to obligations under international treaties, conventions and agreements to which the two may be party.

The parties agreed to grant each other the "Most-Favoured Nation" treatment in accordance with principles under the World Trade Organisation's agreement and its annexures.

Parties agreed to encourage their enterprises and organisations to participate in exhibitions, fairs and other activities and promote the exchange of trade delegation and business representative. They agreed to promote the conduct of trade and economic activities of each's natural and juristic persons in accordance with generally accepted international trade practices.

They also agreed to allow the joint importations of goods and services free from import duties, taxes and levies; and to provide freedom of transit of goods between the two parties.

In relation to payment for goods and services arising out of contracts, there is an agreement that it be made in freely convertible currency in accordance with foreign exchange laws and regulations of the parties.

The parties also agreed on the Establishment of a Joint Economic Commission to promote and facilitate trade and economic cooperation between the parties.

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Notes following Briefing by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad Regarding Incoming Official Visit by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Union Buildings, Pretoria Tuesday, 1 March 2005

Official visit to South Africa by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Deputy President Jacob Zuma will host his Turkish counterpart, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on an official visit in South Africa from Wednesday - Saturday, 2-5 March 2005.

Deputy President Zuma's delegation will include, among others, Ministers Jeff Radebe, Mosiuoa Lekota, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Mandisi Mpahlwa, Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad and South Africa's representative to Turkey, Ambassador Mngqikana.

Prime Minister Erdogan's delegation will include, among others: Ministers of Finance, Energy and Natural Resources, Transport and State Minister for Co-operation and Development - Kemal Unatikan, Dr Hilmi Guler, Binali Yildirim and Besir Atalay respectively and 60 senior businesspeople.

Turkey is one of South Africa's largest trading partners in the region.

In addition, President Mbeki has just paid a State Visit to the Hellenic Republic - the visit, the second in as many weeks of countries of the same region, presents South Africa with an excellent opportunity to fully assess developments in the region.

South Africa and Turkey, are countries at similar stages of development, with dynamic transitional economies and societies and have much to offer each other. In a geo-political and geo-strategic context both countries continue to play an important, stabilising role in the international community as well as in a regional setting. Turkey is now amongst the top 20 economies in the World.

Turkey has declared 2005 as a priority to focus on Africa; and its policy as reflected in the 1998 Action Plan of Opening up to Africa is aimed at developing relations and enhancing cooperation with African countries in all areas. These include a comprehensive political dialogue and establishment of bilateral consultative mechanisms. In terms of NEPAD, Turkey remains interested in joint ventures with SA construction and engineering entities. Turkey also wants to discuss expanding educational scholarships for South African and African students.

The relationship between South Africa and Turkey will take an important step forward through this highest level visit ever by a Turkish leader. The visit will introduce new levels of co-operation and an era of strong growth in our political and economic relations.

South Africa/Turkey Economic Trade And Investment Relations

In terms of the legal framework the following bilateral agreements have been concluded or are under consideration by the respective governments:

Concluded Agreements

- Tourism Co-operation Agreement
- Police Co-operation Agreement
- Protection of investment Agreement
- Agreement on Air Transport
- Protocol on Political Consultations
- Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Agreement

Under Consideration (to be signed during the visit)

- Agreement on Double Taxation (under consideration - to be signed)

- Customs Agreement (under consideration - to be signed)
- Economic and Trade Agreement (initialled - to be signed)

Although Turkey is one of South Africa's largest trading partners, the balance of trade is strongly in South Africa's favour. In this regard, SA exports of gold to Turkey were USD 604 million (R3, 7 billion) during January - November 2004 and increased by 628% as compared to the same period of 2003, which were \$ 83 million (R 502 million). Total gold imports of Turkey were 251 tons with a value of US\$ 3.5 billion in 2004.

South African exports to Turkey consist largely of beneficiated goods: automotive spare parts, woven pile and chenille fabrics, and woven textiles of synthetic fibres, sanitary paper articles, small electrical home appliances, hazelnuts and motorcar tyres. South Africa is also shifting from raw materials especially gold to value added goods and services including automotive parts, boilers, finished stainless steel products, furnaces, information technology and security equipment and management services.

South African imports from Turkey include:

- Articles of paper, pulp, and paper board
- Automotive and spare parts
- Tractors and spare parts, chassis, cars, commercial vehicle brakes drums, disk brakes
- Machinery
- Textiles out of staple fibre and synthetic filament
- Electrical appliances
- Special woven fabrics
- Rubber and article
- Iron and steel wires, cables
- Home textiles
- Article of stone, plaster (marble)
- Tobacco
- Inorganic chemicals
- Cotton textile
- Gold jewellery
- Dried tomatoes
- Industrial textiles
- Processed and packed fruits and vegetables

I believe and have said so quite consistently - the South African private sector is not sufficiently exploiting the economic potential that exists between South Africa and the various countries in the world. The Prime Minister's visit to South Africa with such a high level delegation indicates the opportunity for expansion of economic relations. Turkey is also used by South Africa as a springboard to former Asian republics of the former Soviet Union.

Six Turkish companies, several of them household names in that country, have set up plants in South Africa - Zorlu-Kortex; Cankurtaran-Conti; Sumo Colliery SA; Sesli Holdings; Uludag Blankets; Ahlesa Textiles. There are over 50 registered Turkish companies trading or providing services in the tourism and restaurant sectors in South Africa.

South African companies in Turkey include Macsteel in Istanbul; Grinaker Construction and Steinmueller Africa are involved in civil engineering projects. Companies with buying agents in Turkey are: Conlong, Mossop Western Leathers, Harvey Roofing, Breathetex, Samancor, Sappi, Sasol, Hulett Aluminium, Trident Midrand Steel, G. Mondiano SA, Aquazure Hatcheries, BEC/Disavascular Medical, Karoo Livestock Exports.

In addition, Turkey is a major tourism destination. We hope that this visit will encourage the restoration of air links between both countries.

South Africa is considered as a "Developing Country" by Turkey and is therefore exempt from certain taxes, etc.

Turkey has engaged the SA Customs Union (SACU) to conclude a Free Trade Agreement with SACU. The visit must be used to fast track this process.

United Nations Security Council

Turkey in November 2004 formally requested SA's support for its candidature as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the term 2009-2010. The elections will take place during the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly in 2008.

Turkey also serves as Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) - this is significant as the OIC remains a major organisation through which to bring together all Muslim countries - South Africa has requested observer status of the OIC.

Turkey and EU membership

EU membership remains Turkey key foreign and domestic policy priority. The EU and Turkey on 17 December 2004 formally agreed that Turkey would start accession negotiations on 3rd October 2005.

Turkey and Peacekeeping

Turkey has actively contributed to preserve international peace and stability at the regional and global levels. With regard to peace and security, Turkey has provided troops, civilian police officers and observers to international peacekeeping missions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East. We hope the visit will provide an opportunity to discuss the sharing of expertise with regard to peacekeeping initiatives.

Finally, Turkey remains a crucial player with regard to Middle East politics and dynamics.

Zimbabwean Elections (31 March 2005)

I, last week, handed out a list of delegations that have been invited to observe the Zimbabwean elections on 31 March 2005.

SADC has received its invitation to observe these elections - the Executive Secretary of SADC and South Africa as Chair of the SADC: Organ on Politics, Defence and Security have written to all member states inviting nominations for the SADC observer team.

President Mbeki has said that the mandate of this team will not be to merely observe but to intervene where necessary in order to create the conditions for free and fair elections to be held, through which the will of the Zimbabwean people can be expressed.

Parliament has already nominated a parliamentary delegation - the legislature will determine whether this delegation will be part of the SADC Parliamentary Forum or observe the elections in their own capacity.

Questions and Answers

Question Deputy Minister Pahad, when you say election observers will be deployed soon, what do you mean? 30 days is hardly sufficient to observe the elections. In addition, are you in contact with the Zimbabwean authorities - when will foreign media be allowed access to Zimbabwe?

Answer With regards to the media, you should let us know when you have applied for accreditation and we will follow this up with the Zimbabwean authorities. Regarding the SADC

delegation to Zimbabwe, this is a matter of logistics and resources. Resources will determine how many observers can be deployed and for how long.

Question Deputy Minister, will South Africa observe the elections only as part of the SADC delegation? Will you be sending a separate South African delegation?

Answer The Zimbabwean government has invited South Africa to observe the elections in 5 capacities - as part of SADC; as Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security; as a neighbouring country of Zimbabwe; as the ANC; and as part of the Parliamentary Forum.

However, we have yet to determine in how many fora we will participate and how observers will be deployed.

Question Deputy Minister, have you had any discourse with the Zimbabwean government with regard to the role the South African observers will play during the elections - ie. not merely to observe?

Answer We have had no indications to the contrary - and this is the role we played in the last elections - South Africa had two ministers as part of the observer mission in 2002 with the role specifically to intervene where necessary.

Question Deputy Minister, what is South Africa's comment on the US State Department report condemning human rights abuses in South Africa?

Answer The South African government (Ministry of Justice and Foreign Affairs) will study this report more closely and then discuss with the United States directly.

Our view is that our track record speaks for itself - we do however accept that all countries have problems.

Question Deputy Minister, regarding the Turkish visit - have the problems with regard to arms sales between both countries been resolved?

Answer Yes, all the problems have been resolved - and both countries have been removed from each others red lists.

Question Deputy Minister, is South Africa convinced that the Kurds are not being persecuted?

Answer This matter must be dealt with and resolved within the totality of the dynamics of the Middle East.

Question Deputy Minister, with regard to the Ivory Coast - the rebels have just said that the peace process is dead - what is South Africa's comment?

Answer I am surprised that this is their view. In addition, South Africa is not intervening on its own but as part of a mandate from the African Union. I had been under the impression that progress was being made.

Question Deputy Minister, could you advise on the status of the legal team to the Ivory Coast?

Answer The team consisting of lawyers from Burundi and Rwanda is still in the Ivory Coast studying the synergies between the legislation and the Lineas Marcoussis Agreement.

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