

DOCUMENTS 1

THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY FOREIGN MINISTER, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ABDULLAH GUL AT THE COMMEMORATION CEREMONY FOR THE MARTYRS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS

18 March 2005

Esteemed relatives of our revered martyrs,
My valuable colleagues,

We are here today to commemorate yet another time those members of our Ministry and other public employees that were martyred –together with some of their relatives-- by terrorists while representing our country abroad. We have gathered in the spiritual presence of our martyrs each of whom was an asset.

As a result of the heinous attacks staged in 19 countries by Armenian terrorist organizations during the 1973-1994 period we lost 34 people -- diplomats and family members. Terrorists targeted not only our public employees but their spouses and small children as well.

For us, each of our martyrs laid to rest here is special. We feel in the deepest part of our hearts the pain caused by the loss of all our martyrs. This is an indescribable pain and these experiences cannot be erased from our memories.

We condemn the planners and executors of these organized attacks that were directed against those that had served our country honorably, attacks that pushed humanity back into the dark ages, ended innocent lives. Those that have knowingly refrained from bringing them before justice are left alone with their responsibility before the history.

The Republic of Turkey that has always embraced the principle of building peace and friendship, has made all kinds of efforts to contribute to regional and world peace and it will continue to do so in the future. These attacks have not been and will never be able to make our country deviate from this basic policy.

We are a nation whose tradition is based on tolerance. Today, peace, tranquility, friendship among people, and tolerance are needed more than ever. To be able to meet this need it is high time the international community made a joint effort to eliminate the kind of mentality that conveys vengefulness and hatred to the future generations.

We see the relations with the Armenians too in this context. This is why, all these years we have urged those --that set out with certain allegations—to come and let us examine these together and shed light on the facts together. In the latest instance we proposed establishment of a commission on this subject. We said, our archives are open, let you and the other countries concerned too open the archives. It is only that way that the souls of those who experienced the tragedy of the past –Turks and non-Turks— can have peace as well as the souls of our martyrs whom we lost due to terrorism (and not by way of using these as political propaganda material). While historians would do that, let us, as countries, ponder how to build friendship between our peoples, how to cooperate. Rather than turning our youngsters, the future generations, into hostages for the sake of certain aspirations, let us create a climate of friendship and fraternity for them.

Esteemed families of our revered martyrs,

My valuable colleagues,

Our martyrs have shown the world so many times that those who represent Turkey hold their love for the homeland and their sense of duty more precious than even their lives when required. Their great courage has reinforced even further our conviction that those who are still chasing certain desperate aspirations will fail and that the Republic of Turkey will live forever, bolstering the confidence of our future generations that will have a bright future.

Words are not enough to express our gratitude to our martyrs that have sacrificed their lives for our country. We continue to work rapidly towards building a monument in the Ministry garden as a symbolic expression of our feelings of gratitude and, also, as a reminder of the need for us to protect the past and the future of our nation.

We will also carry in our hearts forever the pain caused by the loss of our security officials that were martyred as a result of a terrorist attack on their way to work at our Baghdad Embassy on Dec. 17, 2004.

God bless our revered martyrs. Most sincerely I wish that their bereaved families and friends would find in them the power of endurance to bear their pain.

On the martyrs' day we commemorate with respect and gratitude yet another group their lives for the homeland and the thousands of martyrs victimized by terror. Let their souls be at peace.