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*To be posted in July 2024.
Introduction

As we celebrate the centennial of the Turkish Republic this year, I realized that many Turkish Americans are unaware of the dynamic relationship between Türkiye and the United States and the rich interaction between the Turkish and American people. To commemorate the 100th anniversary, I researched the bilateral relationship over the last one hundred years and summarized my findings in “A Historical Chronicle of Turkish American Relations.” This document can be a resource for Turkish Americans, Turkish nationals, and others to become acquainted with the history between Türkiye and the United States.

I also believe the Chronicle could inspire young Turkish Americans to appreciate their heritage and actively participate in the political arena to ensure a balanced dialogue about historical events and American foreign policy. Furthermore, their active participation would hopefully enhance the critical relationship between the two countries and contribute towards bringing peaceful solutions that the world is facing.

In the Chronicle, I present a list of significant events, leaders and ambassadors of both countries, bilateral state and private visits, highlights of influential people, community-focused stories, the historical background of diplomatic buildings in Washington, Ankara, İstanbul, and New York, and the establishment of key organizations (both non-governmental and private) that impacted the bilateral relationship during these 100 years from October 29, 1923, to October 29, 2023.

G. Lincoln McCurdy
October 29, 2023
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David Saltzman helped me with the legal issues between Türkiye and the U.S. I relied a lot on Dr. John Hasse about the Ahmet and Nesuhi Erteğün story. Cemil Özyurt was always there for me when I needed information about the Turkish American community in New York, and he also informed me about the fascinating stories of Turkish Americans in earlier periods. Haldun Tashman was also an excellent source to learn about Turkish American achievements and personal stories.

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One final note. I recommend reading the following two books for those interested in learning more about the Turkish American relationship. (1) The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship, 2022, by Barış Ornarlı. (2) Turkey & America / East & West – Where the Twain Meet, 2019, by Henry P. Williams III.
Chapter 1 | Historical Overview (1923-2023)

1920s

1923 The Republic of Türkiye officially declared by the Grand National Assembly and Mustafa Kemal Pasha elected as the Republic’s first president on October 29. Türkiye and the U.S. signed “The Ankara Agreement” on December 24, resulting in payment to the United States of a lump sum of $1.3 million in full settlement of claims of American citizens based on acts occurring during World War I.

1924 The Grand National Assembly abolished the Caliphate March 3. (Abdülmecit II was the last Caliph of the Ottoman Empire and the only caliph of the Republic of Türkiye.)


1927 U.S. Senate voted on the General Treaty Between the United States and Türkiye, known as the Turkish American Treaty of Lausanne or the other Lausanne Treaty, on January 18. The treaty had been signed on August 6, 1923, in addition to an extradition treaty. Anti-Turkish sentiment, mainly of missionary interests and Armenians, opposed ratification. Senator William H. King (D) of Utah led floor opposition to the treaty, aided by lobbyists of the American Committee Opposed to the Lausanne Treaty. This group evolved from the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA), which later became the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA). Fifty senators voted in favor of the treaty, six short of the two-thirds of the Senate necessary for ratification. Source: The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship by Barış Ornarlı, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, p. 21.

The U.S. and Türkiye established diplomatic relations on February 17.

1929 A new Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between the United States and the Turkish Republic was signed in Ankara on October 1. This treaty was virtually identical to the General Treaty Between the United States and Turkey that was rejected by the U.S. Senate in 1927.

1930s

1930 U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between the United States of America and the Turkish Republic on April 22.

1934 Intense lobbying efforts by Turkish Ambassador Munir Ertegun at the U.S. Department of State and in Hollywood stopped Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's film production of The Forty Days of Musa Dagh. The movie, based on the novel of the same title, intended to depict a small community of Armenians in Hatay (Antakya) resisting deportation by Ottoman troops during World War I.

1936 An international agreement regulating maritime traffic through the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus—the Montreux Convention—was signed on July 20 and went into effect on November 9. The United States was not a party to the Convention.

1938 Atatürk passed away in Dolmabahçe Palace on November 10, 9:05 am.

1939 Hatay (Antakya) previously under the rule of France since the end of World War I was annexed by Türkiye as a result of a plebiscite.

Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, starting the European Theatre of World War II. Türkiye remained neutral.

1940s

1941 Türkiye and Nazi Germany signed the German-Turkish Treaty of Friendship, a non-aggression pact, on June 18.

Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7.

The United States declared war on Japan on December 8.

Nazi Germany declared war on the United States on December 11.

Bulgaria declared war on the United States on December 13, causing Türkiye to share a border with a U.S. opponent.
1943
Turkish President İsmet İnönü met President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom at the Second Cairo Conference, December 4-6. Discussion was on reevaluating Türkiye’s neutrality and the possibility of Türkiye joining the Allies in the war. The meeting also decided to build an air base for the Allies near Adana. Construction, however, did not begin until after the war.

1944
Türkiye severed diplomatic and commercial relations with Nazi Germany on August 2.

Ambassador Munir Ertegun, the dean of the diplomatic community in Washington, died from a heart attack on November 11. His body was carried back to Türkiye on the USS Missouri in April 1946.

1945
Türkiye declared war on Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan on February 23.

World War II ended in Europe with Nazi Germany surrendering on May 8.

World War II ended in the Pacific with the Empire of Japan surrendering on September 2.

The United Nations (UN) officially came into existence on October 24. The U.S. and Türkiye were among the 51 original members.

1946
In response to Soviet demands on Türkiye for shared administration on the straits, the United States countered Soviet pressure by sending ships to Turkish waters.

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Congress created the Fulbright Program in August to promote peace and understanding in the world through an international educational exchange between the United States and other countries, including Türkiye. Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas had proposed this program in a bill in 1945.

The body of Turkish Ambassador Munir Ertegun who passed away in November 1944 in Washington, DC, was carried back to Türkiye on the USS Missouri in April. The quarterdeck of the USS Missouri had been the site of the surrender of the Empire of Japan on September 2.

1947
President Harry S. Truman announced to Congress on March 12 his Administration’s foreign policy of American “support for democracies against authoritarian threats.” This became known as the Truman Doctrine and marked the accepted beginning of the Cold War between the Union of Soviet Socialist...
Republics (USSR) and the United States. Congress designated Türkiye and Greece as special aid recipients against Soviet threats under the Truman Doctrine.

The United States and Türkiye signed the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement under the Truman Doctrine on July 12 offering support to democratic nations against the Soviet threat. Türkiye received $100 million of economic and military aid from the United States, which not only helped to strengthen the Turkish military but also contributed to the infrastructure development in Türkiye.

The American Military Mission for Aid to Türkiye (AMMAT) was established in Ankara in August. AMMAT became the Joint American Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JAMMAT) in 1949. JAMMAT became the largest of the U.S. European Commands by 1951 and the world’s largest military assistance and advisory group. JAMMAT was redesignated the Joint U.S. Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JUSMMAT) in 1958.

1948

The United States was the first nation to recognize Israel on May 14.

1949

Turkey was the first Muslim majority country to recognize Israel in March 1949.

1950

North Korea crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea on June 25, start of the Korean War.

Türkiye declared its intent to send a brigade to fight under UN Command in Korea on July 25.

Arrival of the first troops of the Turkish brigade in the Korean War on October 19. The brigade was attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division throughout the war. Türkiye sent 15,000 troops to South Korea.

After its arrival the first Turkish brigade saved the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division from total annihilation at the Battle of Wawon (Kunu-ri) and received a Presidential Unit Citation from President Harry Truman for its heroic efforts. General Douglas MacArthur, the Commander of the UN Coalition Forces, said, "the Turks are the hero of heroes. There is no impossibility for the Turkish Brigade." In its bulletin entitled *Turkey: Forgotten Ally in a Forgotten War*, marking the 59th anniversary of the signing of the war’s armistice on July 27, 2012, the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) highlighted “The Turkish intervention in Korea was unique in its timeliness and urgency. . .The camaraderie on the battlefield led to deep relations between American and Turkish soldiers. . .”
Construction of an air base outside of Adana began by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the base became operational in 1955. (The decision to build the air base was made during World War II at the Second Cairo Conference in December 1943.) The Turkish General Staff and the U.S. Air Force signed an agreement in 1954 for shared use of the base. The air base was officially named Adana Air Base on February 21, 1955 but renamed Incirlik Air Base on February 28, 1958. Incirlik was a base for CIA-operated U-2 flights in the 1950s; today it remains a strategic facility for U.S. military operations, housing tactical nuclear weapons. For more information: Wikipedia: Incirlik Air Base.

The first exchange of American and Turkish scholars and graduate students began under the Fulbright Program.

Türkiye joined NATO on February 18. As a result, The U.S. military began stationing personnel in the Izmir region later that year.

Armistice signed on July 27, ending the Korean War.

Turkish President Bayar addressed the U.S. Congress on January 29.

Türkiye signed the Military Facilities Agreement with the United States on June 23, allowing a large-scale presence of U.S. troops in Türkiye.

The Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), also known as the Baghdad Pact, was established by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom with support from the United States on February 24. CENTO was a Cold War military alliance against the Soviet Union based on the NATO model. However, the alliance proved to be ineffective. The headquarters for CENTO was initially located in Baghdad but was later moved to Ankara after Iraq left the alliance in 1958. CENTO was dissolved on March 16, 1979, after the Iranian Revolution.

State-sponsored pogrom primarily against the Greek population in İstanbul, September 6-7. Mob attacks targeted private property and Greek Orthodox churches and cemeteries. Dozens were killed and over 1,000 people injured. This sad and tragic event against the Greek minority did not help Türkiye’s image in the U.S., and the Greek American lobby referred to it in its anti-Türkiye campaigns.
1960s

1960 The Turkish military overthrew the government of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes on May 27.

Cyprus became independent from British rule on August 16 with the signing of the Treaty of Guarantee by the United Kingdom, Greece, and Türkiye.

1961 A constitutional referendum was held in Turkey on July 9 to replace the 1924 Constitution. The new Constitution was approved by nearly 62% of voters.

Former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was sentenced to death by a military court and was executed by hanging on September 17. U.S. President John F. Kennedy sent a plea to spare his life.

1962 The launching of President John F. Kennedy’s Peace Corps program in Türkiye. The program was dissolved in 1971 due to growing anti-Americanism in Türkiye and the underutilization of volunteers. Some 1,457 Americans served as Peace Corps volunteers in Türkiye.

1962 In October, the United States and the Soviet Union were on the brink of war due to the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba. The two countries resolved the crisis in the end with an arrangement including U.S. removal of obsolete nuclear-armed Jupiter missiles in Türkiye.

1963 President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22 in Dallas, Texas.

Prime Minister İsmet İnönü attended the funeral of President John F. Kennedy, following his assassination on November 22.

Intercommunal violence beginning on December 21 between Greek and Turkish populations in Cyprus intensified into an armed conflict known by Turkish Cypriots as “Bloody Christmas.”

1964 Intercommunal violence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots continued through the first months of the year. Türkiye threatened to intervene to protect Turkish Cypriots.

1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson sent a strongly worded letter on June 5 to Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü opposing intervention in Cyprus. As a result, anti-Americanism increased in Türkiye.
Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on August 7 after a naval confrontation between the United States and North Vietnam a few days earlier. The joint resolution authorized President Johnson to take any measures to maintain international peace and security in Southeast Asia. It provided the legal basis for the United States to intervene militarily in the Vietnam War without Congress’s formal declaration of war. This resolution allowing the president to commit combat troops in Vietnam resulted in many anti-war protests in the United States and worldwide, including Türkiye.

1965
First U.S. ground troops arrived in Da Nang, South Vietnam on March 8.

1967
A student anti-imperialism demonstration held at İstanbul University on June 24, protested the visit of four ships of the U.S. Navy’s Sixth Fleet to İstanbul.

1968
Prominent civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination on April 4 prompted racial violence nationwide. Riots in over 100 American cities resulted in more than 40 deaths and extensive property damage.

Thousands of demonstrators, mainly students from İstanbul Technical University (ITU), were at the Bosphorus on July 17, protesting the landing of the U.S. Navy’s Sixth Fleet. Protestors carried signs reading “Guardian of American Imperialism: Six Fleet, Get Lost!” The protestors threw a few of the American officers disembarking into the water.


1969
U.S. troop presence in South Vietnam peaked at over 540,000.

American Ambassador Robert Komer’s car burned on the Middle East Technical University campus by leftist students on January 6.

1969
In February, thousands of left-wing students and labor unions gathered in İstanbul’s Beyazıt District to protest the U.S. Navy’s Sixth Fleet week-long visit to Istanbul, which started on February 10. The protestors marched to Taksim Square, met by right-wing students who marched from the Dolmabahçe Mosque. Up to 30,000 people were involved in the leftist protest and the rightist counter-protest, including pro-American elements. The violence occurred, resulting in the deaths of two with scores injured. The demonstrations on February 17 became known as “Bloody Sunday.” Other anti-American protests occurred in Izmir, Adana, and Gaziantep during the visit of the U.S. Sixth Fleet.

A few days before “Bloody Sunday,” 300 female students marched with signs saying, “Turkey is not a brothel for Sixth Fleet.”
Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel attended the state funeral for President Dwight D. Eisenhower on March 31.

1970s

1971 The Turkish government closed the Greek Orthodox Halki seminary on the island of Heybeliada, the second-largest of the Princes’ Islands in the Sea of Marmara. The seminary founded in 1844 was the primary theological school of the Eastern Orthodox Church’s Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (İstanbul) for the training of priests. There has been a continuous campaign since the closing to have the school reopened, including the U.S. government’s support for its reopening. The Turkish government maintained that it would have reopened the seminary if the Patriarchate had consented to administering the school under the Turkish government rather than being independent. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has also proposed an exchange between Greece and Turkey to resolve the issue. The Greeks would reopen the 17th century Fethiye Camii to a mosque to serve the current Muslim population in Athens, and Türkiye would reopen the Halki seminary. The status of the Halki seminary remains a contentious issue between Türkiye and Greece and for the Greek American community.

Turkish Military Memorandum (Second Military Coup) on March 12 forced Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel to resign. The military intervention took place during the period of increased street violence among political factions.

Unfortunately, the military takeover did not resolve the street violence, and it continued to increase in the 1970s after civilian rule was restored.

In his “War on Drugs,” President Richard M. Nixon announced on June 30 that the Prime Minister of Türkiye Nihat Ermi had agreed to eliminate the production of opium poppies by June, 1972. Officials of the Nixon Administration involved in the “War on Drugs" severely criticized Türkiye for its poppy production while overlooking drug smuggling in other countries. Members of Congress also introduced numerous resolutions in the 1970s to penalize Türkiye.

1973 The United States and North Vietnam signed the Paris Peace Accords on January 27, an agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam. The United States withdrew the last American combat troops from South Vietnam on March 29.

1974 The Turkish government decreed the resumption of poppy cultivation on July 1 despite U.S. opposition.
Archbishop Makarios, the president of the Republic of Cyprus, was overthrown on July 15 by the Cypriot National Guard led by Greek officers and instigated by the junta in Athens. Nikos Sampson, an ultra-nationalist, an anti-Turkish fanatic, and pro-Enosis (union between Cyprus and Greece), was installed as the president of the new government. Joseph Sisco, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, was sent to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to attempt mediation. Türkiye’s Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit sought the United Kingdom’s intervention in Cyprus being one of the three nations signing the Treaty of Guarantee for the independence of Cyprus. The UK, however, did not take action.

Türkiye launched Peace Operation in Cyprus on July 20 to protect Turkish minority and occupied 3% of the island.

The Greek military junta collapsed on July 23 mainly because of Cyprus and civilian rule was restored in Greece. Shortly after the change of rule in Greece, Nikos Sampson renounced the presidency in Cyprus.

Peace talks regarding Cyprus were held in Geneva, Switzerland from July 25 to 30 among the three guarantor powers—United Kingdom, Greece, and Türkiye.

Richard M. Nixon’s resignation as president of the United States on August 9 influenced the U.S.’s response to the Cyprus crisis.

Türkiye launched its Second Peace Operation in Cyprus from August 14 to 16 and increased its occupation to 36.2% of the island.

American Ambassador Rodger Paul Davies to Cyprus was killed on August 19 by Greek Cypriot gunmen in Nicosia during an anti-American demonstration outside the U.S. Embassy in protest of the U.S. failure to stop the Turkish intervention.

1975

A U.S. arms embargo on Türkiye passed by the U.S. Congress in late 1974 went into effect on February 5 despite President Gerald Ford’s opposition. Congress accused Türkiye of violating conditions of the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act which bars U.S. arms sales that are used in offensive acts and in violation of international law. Thus, Congress imposed the embargo because of Türkiye’s use of U.S. weapons on Cyprus in the summer of 1974. Congressman Stephen John Brademas, Jr. (D-IN), the first Greek American elected to Congress, and the Greek American lobby had waged an aggressive lobbying to ensure the embargo’s passage.
Türkiye declared on February 13 the areas in the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus that it controls as the “Federated Turkish State.” The international community including the United States condemned Türkiye’s action.

The Turkish government in July closed all U.S. military bases in Türkiye in retaliation to the congressional arms embargo on Turkey. The suspension of U.S. military activities in Türkiye did not affect the NATO command at the Incirlik and Izmir Air Bases.

1978

The revolution group Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) founded by Abdullah Öcalan with the objective to establish a Kurdish state in southeastern Türkiye.

The U.S. Senate on July 25, responding to President Jimmy Carter’s appeals, voted 57 to 42 to repeal the arms embargo imposed on Türkiye for using U.S. weapons on Cyprus. Seven days later, the U.S. House of Representatives, under intense White House lobbying, also voted 208 to 205 to lift the arms embargo, effectively repealing the arms embargo imposed on Türkiye.

1980s

1980

The United States and Turkey signed on March 29 the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) to foster military, economic, and social development between the two countries. On defense matters, DECA addressed the U.S. use of military facilities in Türkiye and proposed military construction in addition to Turkish military needs.

The Turkish military on September 12 overthrew the government of Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel. Türkiye was on the verge of civil war averaging between 20 and 30 deaths per day from domestic terrorism by leftist and rightist groups and Kurdish separatists.

President Ronald Reagan used the term “genocide” on April 22 in a statement about the Holocaust, “Like the genocide of the Armenians before it. . . the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.” President Reagan, however, did not use the term “genocide” in his statements about Armenian Remembrance Day on April 24 during his two terms of office.

1982

JCAG (Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide) members Hampig Sassounian and Krikor Saliba assassinated Turkish Consul General Kemal Arıkan in Los Angeles, California on January 28.

Armenian extremists assassinated Turkish Honorary Consul Orhan Gündüz on May 4 in Cambridge Massachusetts.
A constitutional referendum was held in Turkey on November 7 to replace the 1961 Constitution. It was approved by 91% of the voters.

1983 The Turkish Cypriot people declared their independence on November 15 from the Republic of Cyprus and established the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Türkiye was and continues to be the only country recognizing the TRNC. The declaration of independence by the Turkish Cypriots was condemned by the United Nations.

1984 Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) was established to start producing American fighter aircraft locally under license for the Turkish Air Force.

The PKK launched an insurgency on August 15 to establish Kurdistan in southeastern Türkiye.

1987 The first American F-16Cs built in Türkiye were flown on October 20.

1990s

1990 Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on August 2.

1991 The United States and Allied Forces conducted Operation Desert Storm and liberated Kuwait from Iraq, January 17 – February 28, known as Gulf War I. Türkiye permitted the U.S. and coalition forces the use of its airspace and bases during the war and postwar patrolling of northern Iraq.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) dissolved itself on December 26, thereby ending the Cold War between the USSR and the United States, March 12, 1947 – December 26, 1991.

The U.S. government between 1991 and 1992 closed eight of twelve of its military bases in Türkiye and discontinued major military grant aid to Türkiye due to the post-Cold War environment. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

1992 War broke out among Bosniaks (Muslims), Croats, and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina on April 6 as a result of the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Türkiye actively supported the Bosniaks. The war continued until the end of 1995.
A Chronicle of Turkish American Relations: 1923 – 2023

Chapter 1 | Historical Overview (1923-2023)

1993

A Turkish general took over the command of a combined military force of the United States and United Nations known as UNOSOM II (United Nations Operation in Somalia) in Mogadishu, Somalia, in April. UNOSOM was spearheaded by the United States to battle lawlessness and famine in Somalia.

President Turgut Özal died from a heart attack on April 17. Neither President William Clinton or Vice President Al Gore attended his funeral. There was disappointment in Türkiye that former President George H. W. Bush did not attend the funeral service. Americans representing the United States at the funeral included former Secretary of State James Baker, Ahmet Ertegun, and MG Fred Haynes (USMC Ret.), president of the American Turkish Council.

1994

Congress withheld military loans to Türkiye until submission of executive branch report on alleged human rights violations in relations to Türkiye-PKK violence. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

The Joint U.S. Military Mission for Aid to Turkey (JUSMMAT) became the Office of Defense Cooperation Turkey (ODC-T) in 1994.

1995

The Bosnian War peace negotiations took place at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, in November, which resulted in the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known at the Dayton Peace Accords. The Dayton Peace Accords ending the Bosnian War were signed in Paris on December 14.

NATO deployed peacekeeping troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina starting in December to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement. Türkiye played a key role in the NATO deployment.

The European Union–Turkey Customs Union agreement came into effect on 31 December 1995, following a 6 March 1995 Decision of the European Community–Turkey Association Council to implement a customs union between the two parties. "The United States had supported Turkey's bid for EU membership through several steps in the process: from the EU Turkey Customs Union agreement in 1995 to Turkey's appointment as a candidate country in December 1999, and later to open the accession negotiations in October 2005. Backing Turkey's bid was a strategic component of the U.S. policy to anchor Turkey in the transatlantic community." (Kirişçi, Kemal. 2018. Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.)
1996 With U.S. encouragement, Türkiye and Israel signed two secret cooperation agreements strengthening defense and intelligence ties. The alliance between Türkiye and Israel also fostered cooperation between Jewish and Turkish Americans. American Jewish organizations were particularly helpful in opposing Armenian genocide resolutions in Congress.

1997 The Turkish Military issued a memorandum on February 28 that initiated the resignation of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan’s government.

The PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party) was designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State in October.

1999 The deployment of international peacekeeping troops in Kosovo led by NATO known as the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in June to stop the fighting between ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians. Both the United States and Türkiye participated in the peacekeeping operation.

PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured in Kenya by MIT (National Intelligence Agency of Türkiye) with the assistance of the CIA on November 15.

President Clinton was the first American president to address the Turkish Grand National Assembly on November 15.

The agreement to build the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was signed in Türkiye on November 18 by Turkish President Süleyman Demirel, Azeri President Heydar Aliyev, and Georgian President Eduard Shavdnadze in the presence of U.S. President William Clinton.

2000s

2001 Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans was formed in March by Congressmen Robert Wexler (D-FL/19th) and Ed Whitfield (R-KY/1st).

The Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda inflicted the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil on September 11.

The United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom on October 7 in retaliation for terrorist attacks on September 11 by invading Taliban-ruled Afghanistan with a multinational force. Türkiye supported the U.S. in the war on terror and joined the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Turkish contractors also played an important role in Afghanistan infrastructure projects funded by the United States and other countries.
2002 Following the AK (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/Justice and Development Party) Party’s electoral victories in November, President George W. Bush welcomed Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Chairman of the AK Party to the White House on December 10. Bush affirmed standing “side by side” with Türkiye and supported Türkiye’s efforts at the time to join the EU.

2003 The Turkish Grand National Assembly on March 1 failed to pass legislation allowing American troops to transit Türkiye to invade Iraq. The vote was 264 votes in favor and 250 votes opposed; a 276 absolute majority was necessary for passage.

The U.S. began military operations into Iraq on March 20, the start of Gulf War 2.

American military operatives stormed a Turkish compound in Northern Iraq on July 4. During the campaign 11 Turkish military operatives were taken captive. The Turkish soldiers were led out in hoods and later interrogated. After requests from Türkiye, the U.S. released the soldiers. A joint U.S.-Türkiye commission was later created to investigate the events. The commission released a joint statement of regret.

2008 Fethullah Gülen, an Islamic scholar, preacher, leader of the Gülen movement, and an ally of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the time, was granted permanent residency (Green Card) in the United States. He has lived in self-exile in the U.S. near Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania, since 1999.

2009 On his first bilateral trip abroad, President Barack Obama addressed the Turkish Grand National Assembly on April 6.

2010s

2010 Anti-government protests in Tunisia initiated the Arab Spring movement that spread across much of the Arab world. The Arab Spring became an important component of the U.S. - Türkiye relationship. It eventually led to civil war in Syria, which developed into a major problem in the bilateral relationship.

Türkiye downgraded ties with Israel after Israel’s raid on the Mavi Marmara (part of an activist-led flotilla seeking humanitarian relief for the Gaza Strip), leaving eight Turkish citizens dead. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.
2011 Türkiye agreed to U.S./NATO deployment of missile defense radar on its territory. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

On April 12, John Boehner became the first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives to meet exclusively with leaders of the Turkish American community while in office.

Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK/4th) introduced H.R.2362, Indian Tribal Trade and Investment Demonstration Project Act of 2011, with 12 cosponsors on June 24. One aspect of this bill, initiated by the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA), sought to attract foreign investment on tribal land from all 155 World Trade Organization (WTO) member countries, including Türkiye. Although there was strong bipartisan support and full backing of major tribes, it failed to pass in the House because of the Armenian and Greek lobbies.

2013 On May 28, hundreds of protesters opposed to plans to replace İstanbul’s Taksim Gezi Park with a shopping mall were arrested. Subsequent nationwide protests and corruption allegations increased domestic and Western criticism of Erdoğan and his government. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) provided a $200,000 grant to Oregon’s Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring (CTWS) to cover the cost of two water tanks that serve an elementary school. The Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) and the Turkish Embassy in Washington spearheaded funding of the project.

The leadership of the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) and the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA) met with U.S. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner (R/OH) in his office in the U.S. Capitol on October 10.

2014 FBI raided multiple Fethullah Gülen-affiliated charter schools in June seeking information on insider contracts and misuse of state funds.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took the oath of office as the 12th president of the Republic of Türkiye on August 28 after becoming the nation’s first popularly elected president with 51.79% of the vote. The other presidential candidates were Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu with 38.44% and Selahattin Demirtaş with 9.76%.

ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) launched its siege of the canton of Kobani and its main city in northern Syria on the border of Türkiye on September
13. Some 400,000 Kurdish refugees fled into Türkiye. Türkiye was criticized by American and international press for not intervening. The battle for Kobani was the turning point in the war against ISIL. It was also the beginning of cooperation between the United States and YPG (Kurdish People’s Defense Units), an offshoot of the PKK. American collaboration with the YPG further increased tension in the bilateral relationship between Türkiye and the U.S.

2015

Congressman Pete Session (R-TX/17th) introduced H.Res.226 on April 28 in the 114th Congress (2015-2016). The resolution called on the President to work toward equitable, constructive, stable, and durable Armenian-Turkish relations for the next 100 years based upon the two countries' common interests and the United States' significant security interests in the region. However, the resolution did not reach the House floor for a vote.

2016

Reza Zarrab, an Iranian-born businessman with Iranian, Azerbaijani, Turkish and North Macedonian citizenship was arrested in Miami on March 19 for violating U.S. sanctions against Iran involving millions of dollars of transactions. He was transferred to New York for trial where he was indicted with two others by the U.S. Department of Justice on March 21. This case would eventually affect U.S.-Turkish relations.

A faction of the Turkish military attempted a coup d’etat against the Turkish government and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on July 15. Among other groups, Fethullah Gülen and his followers were accused of attempting to overthrow the government. More than 250 people were killed, and more than 2,100 were wounded. Turkish Incirlik Base Commander General Bekir, who was involved in the coup attempt, sought asylum from the U.S., but his request was denied. President Barack Obama condemned the coup on the same day. After the coup attempt, Türkiye began direct military operations in Syria against the Islamic State and YPG (Kurdish-led forces), further increasing tension with the United States.

Türkiye submitted a formal request to the U.S. in August for the extradition of Fethullah Gülen, who the Turkish government accused as the ringleader of the July 15 coup attempt. However, the U.S. government has not sent the case to court, maintaining that Türkiye has not provided sufficient evidence for the crimes that Gülen is accused of, as required by the bilateral extradition treaty.

General Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited his Turkish counterpart, General Hulusi Akar, chief of the Turkish General Staff, in Ankara to show support as “one friend making sure another was well after a traumatic experience” in the July 15th coup attempt. General Dunford was the first senior American official and international leader to visit Turkey after the attempted coup. The general also met with Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and İsmail
Kahraman, the Grand National Assembly speaker. Source: Aug. 1, 2016 | By Jim Garamone, DOD News.

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden visited Ankara on August 24 to ease U.S.-Türkiye ties, further strained after the attempted July 15 coup attempt. He met with President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Yıldırım.

President Erdoğan met with President Barack Obama at the G20 Summit in Hangzhou, China on September 4. President Obama stated “This is the first opportunity that I’ve had to meet face to face with President Erdoğan since the terrible attempted coup that took place in July. By taking to the streets to resist the coup attempt, the Turkish people once again affirmed their commitment to democracy, and the strength and resilience of the democratic institutions inside of Turkey. . .”

Following the coup d’etat attempt in July, the Turkish government arrested tens of thousands of people suspected of being associated with the Gülenist Terror Group (FETO), including approximately 20 individuals with American citizenship. One of these was Andrew Craig Brunson, an American evangelical pastor of the small Izmir Resurrection (Protestant) Church. He was arrested in October on charges of being associated with the Gülenists and PKK. He was also accused of helping to plan the coup and involved with American espionage. His arrest and trial increased diplomatic tensions between the two governments and further damaged Türkiye’s reputation in the U.S. Congress.

The Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Türkiye Relations and Turkish American achieved its highest peak of 160 members at the end of the 114th Congress in December. The Türkiye Caucus was in the top three of the largest bilateral caucuses in Congress along India and Taiwan. At this point, the Türkiye Caucus was represented in 43 out of the 50 states, District of Columbia, and all five of the U.S. territories.

The United States began directly arming PKK-linked Kurdish forces in Syria against Turkish wishes. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Mehmet Hakan Atilla, in an expansion of the Zarrab case, an employee of Turkish state bank Halkbank was arrested on March 27 in New York on allegations of conspiring to conceal transactions with sanctioned Iranian entities. An updated indictment alleges corruption by several Turkish officials.

A constitutional referendum was held in Türkiye on April 16 to amend the Turkish constitution by abolishing the office of prime minister and replacing the
parliamentary system with an executive presidency and presidential system. The proposed amendments were approved by a little over 51% of the vote.

A melee among pro-Türkiye civilians, pro-PKK protestors, and Turkish security guards occurred outside of the Turkish Embassy residence in Washington, DC, on May 1 as President Erdoğan arrived for an event following meetings with the Trump administration at the White House.

A Washington, DC federal grand jury on August 30 indicted 19 people, including 15 Turkish guards over the melee outside of the Turkish Embassy residence. None of the pro-PKK protestors were indicted, despite having inflicted serious injuries on pro-Turkey civilians.

President Erdoğan suggested in a speech to a police academy on September 28 that the U.S. and Türkiye swap clerics. According to NPR's Peter Kenyon, President Erdoğan said, "You have a pastor too (Gülen). . .You give us that one and we'll work with our judiciary and give back yours (Brunson)." Source: NPR, "Turkey's Erdoğan Suggests Swap: Jailed U.S. Pastor for Turkish Cleric," September 29, 2017, by Bill Chappell.

Congressman Steve Stivers (R-OH/15th) introduced H.Res.573 on October 12 in the 115th Congress (2017-2018). As in 2015, the resolution called on the President to work toward equitable, constructive, stable, and durable Armenian-Turkish relations based upon the two countries' common interests and the United States' significant security interests in the region. However, it again did not reach the House floor for a vote.

Approximately one month before the start of the trial of Mehmet Hakan Atilla, Reza Zarrab pleaded guilty on October 26 to each of the six counts. Zarrab agreed to cooperate with the Government and would be one of the Government's principal witnesses against Atilla at Atilla’s trial.

2018

In Syria’s Afrin district, Türkiye and allied Syrian opposition militia intervened directly against PKK-linked Syrian Kurdish forces. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Mehmet Hakan Atilla is convicted on five of six counts against him by a New York federal jury on January 3.

Federal prosecutors on May 22 dropped charges against 11 of the Turkish guards involved in the melee outside of the Turkish Embassy residence.
Two lawsuits were filed in federal court in Washington, D.C. in May against the Government of Turkey and others for alleged injuries that occurred during the melee outside of the Turkish Embassy residence.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan won reelection with 52.59% of the vote on June 24 defeating Muharrem Ince (30.64%), Selahattin Demirtaş (8.40%), and Meral Akşener (7.29%).

During the summer of 2018, President Trump tweeted President Erdoğan about releasing American Pastor Andrew Brunson. The U.S. government enacted several measures against Türkiye due to Brunson's imprisonment, while President Trump unilaterally imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Türkiye. President Erdoğan's response was, "Just as America has its judiciary, Turkey does as well. . .Instead of respecting the decision of the (Turkish) judiciary, they are making this a matter of sanctions against Turkey. . .You cannot make Turkey step back with sanctions." Source: The Washington Post, "Erdoğan dismisses Trump's threat of sanction over detained American pastor," July 29, 2018, by Kareem Fahim.

American Pastor Andrew Brunson was convicted on October 12 by a Turkish court in Izmir on the charge of supporting terrorism. However, he was sentenced to time served and released from custody. Brunson returned to the United States on the same day and met with President Trump in the Oval Office.

Türkiye took delivery of the S-400 air defense system from Russia, The U.S. removed Türkiye from the F-35 development program; some Members of Congress reportedly placed informal holds on major arms sales to Türkiye. In northeastern Syria, Turkish-led forces attacked the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces, increasing the Syrian territory Türkiye administered along its border and triggering strong U.S. criticism. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA/26th) introduced on April 4 H.Res.296 in the 116th Congress (2019-2020) with 141 sponsors. This resolution stated that it is U.S. policy to (1) commemorate the Armenian Genocide, the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923; (2) reject efforts to associate the U.S. government with efforts to deny the existence of the Armenian Genocide or any genocide; and (3) encourage education and public understanding about the Armenian Genocide. The House passed the resolution on October 29, the same day of the founding of the Turkish Republic, with a vote of 405 Yeas, 11 Nays, and 3 Present.
Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) introduced on April 19 S.Res.150 in the 116th Congress (2019-2020) with 28 cosponsors. This resolution stated that it is U.S. policy to (1) commemorate the Armenian Genocide, the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923; (2) reject efforts to associate the U.S. government with efforts to deny the existence of the Armenian Genocide or any genocide; and (3) encourage education and public understanding about the Armenian Genocide. The Senate passed the resolution in December with unanimous consent.

Note: Since 1971, there have been some 25 Armenian genocide resolutions introduced in Congress. It should also be noted that there has not been an official U.S. recognition of the ethnic cleansing of Turks, Muslims, and Jews in Southeastern Europe from the late 1800s through the early 20th century.

On October 15, the United States, indicted Halkbank on charges of conspiring to evade Iran sanctions, based on evidence adduced during the trial of Halkbank employee Mehmet Hakan Atilla.

President Trump hosted a meeting for President Erdoğan at the White House in November to talk with five Republican senators about the mood in Congress regarding Türkiye’s acquisition of the Russian S-400 air defense system and the U.S. Kurdish allies in Syria. The five senators were Chairman of the Foreign Relation Committee Jim Risch of Idaho, Ted Cruz of Texas, Rick Scott of Florida, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, and Joni Ernst of Iowa. The meeting between President Erdoğan and the five senators was contentious, with nothing resolved.

2020s

2020

Türkiye’s successful use of drone aircraft against Russian-origin equipment in Syria and elsewhere gained it greater global notoriety linked to its arms exports.

Eastern Mediterranean maritime border and energy disputes intensified between Türkiye and some NATO countries and other U.S. partners.

The Trump Administration imposed sanctions on Turkey’s arms procurement agency and some of its officials for the S-400 acquisition. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

The federal court in Washington D.C. denied Türkiye’s motion on February 6 to dismiss the Kurd and Usoyan civil suits stemming from the melee outside of the Turkish Embassy residence.
2021

President Joe Biden became the first president on April 24 to recognize the massacre of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire officially as a genocide in the traditional presidential Armenian Remembrance Day proclamation.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit affirmed on July 27 that the civil suits stemming from the melee outside of the Turkish Embassy residence can go to trial.

Turkish government began on December 27 the process to have the republic’s name officially changed to “Türkiye” through United Nations’ channels.

2022

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine leads to a multifaceted Turkish response: some military and political support for Ukraine, and increased economic and energy ties with Russia. Türkiye began mediating between the warring parties, especially the Black Sea grain deal. Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) Turkey (Türkiye)-U.S. Relations: Timeline and Brief Historical Context prepared by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Mississippi became the 50th and final state to recognize the Armenian genocide in March.

The United States completed the withdrawal of military forces and diplomatic corps on August 30 which marked the end of the U.S. 20-year involvement in the Afghanistan War from 2001 to 2021.

The United Nations formally established the spelling of the Turkish Republic as “Türkiye” on June 2.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with President Joe Biden during the NATO Summit in Madrid, Spain, on June 29.

President Erdoğan met with President Biden during G-20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, on November 22.

2023

U.S. Department of State announced on January 5 that the American government would use the spelling of “Türkiye” in official communication.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on April 19 that Halkbank was not immune from prosecution under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, but sent the case back to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit to determine whether the bank is immune under principles of common law and customary international law.
President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in a run-off election on May 28 won a third term as president with 52.18 % of the vote defeating Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (47.82%).

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with President Joe Biden during the NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 1. President Erdoğan promised to lift Türkiye’s veto over Sweden’s entry into NATO whereas President Biden announced that his administration will proceed with the sale of F-16s to Türkiye and would give notification to Congress.

The U.S. military shot down an armed Turkish drone after it came too close to American troops in northeastern Syria on October 5. It was a rare incident of force by one NATO member against another.

Hamas militant groups staged a surprise attack on Israel from Gaza on October 7 igniting a new war in the Middle East with thousands of casualties. The war increased tensions between the United States and Türkiye.

Türkiye assumed command of the NATO-led force in Kosovo in October as tensions flared again between ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians.
### Chapter 2 | Leaders of United States and Türkiye

#### Presidents of the United States of America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Term Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calvin Coolidge</td>
<td>August 2, 1923 - March 4, 1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Hoover</td>
<td>March 4, 1929 - March 4, 1933</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin D. Roosevelt</td>
<td>March 4, 1933 - April 12, 1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry S. Truman</td>
<td>April 12, 1945 - January 20, 1953</td>
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<td>Dwight D. Eisenhower</td>
<td>January 20, 1953 - January 20, 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td>John F. Kennedy</td>
<td>January 20, 1961 - November 22, 1963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyndon B. Johnson</td>
<td>November 22, 1963 - January 20, 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard M. Nixon</td>
<td>January 20, 1969 - August 9, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Ford</td>
<td>August 9, 1974 - January 20, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
<td>January 20, 2001 - January 20, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barak Obama</td>
<td>January 20, 2009 - January 20, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>January 20, 2017 - January 20, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph R. Biden, Jr.</td>
<td>January 20, 2021 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presidents of Republic of Türkiye

**Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**
October 29, 1923 - November 10, 1938

**İsmet İnönü**
November 10, 1938 - May 27, 1950

**Celal Bayar**
May 27, 1950 - May 27, 1960

**General Cemal Gürsel** - Chairman of the National Unity Committee (Military Rule)
May 27, 1960 - October 10, 1961

**Cemal Gürsel**
October 10, 1961 - February 2, 1966

**İbrahim Şevki Atasagun** - Acting President
February 2, 1966 - March 28, 1966

**Cevdet Sunay**
March 28, 1966 - March 28, 1973

**Tekin Arıburun** - Acting President
March 28, 1973 - April 6, 1973

**Fahri Korutürk**
April 6, 1973 - April 6, 1980

**Ihsan Sabri Çağlayangil** - Acting President
April 6, 1980 - September 12, 1980

**General Kenan Evren** - Chairman of National Security Council (Military Rule)
September 12, 1980 - November 9, 1982

**Kenan Evren**
November 9, 1982 - November 9, 1989

**Turgut Özal**
November 9, 1989 - April 17, 1993

**Hüsamettin Cindoruk** - Acting President
April 17, 1993 - May 16, 1993

**Süleyman Demirel**
May 16, 1993 - May 16, 2000

**Ahmet Necdet Sezer**
May 16, 2000 - August 28, 2007

**Abdullah Gül**
August 28, 2007 - August 28, 2014

**Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**
August 28, 2014 -
Prime Ministers of Republic of Türkiye

İsmet İnönü
October 30, 1923 - March 6, 1924
March 6, 1924 - November 22, 1924

Fethi Okyar
November 22, 1924 - March 6, 1925

İsmet İnönü
March 6, 1925 - November 1, 1927
November 1, 1927 - September 27, 1930

İsmet İnönü
November 1, 1927 - September 27, 1930
September 27, 1930 - May 4, 1931
May 4, 1931 - March 1, 1935
March 1, 1935 - November 1, 1937

Celal Bayar
November 1, 1937 - November 11, 1938
November 11, 1938 - January 25, 1939

Refik Saydam
January 25, 1939 - April 3, 1939
April 3, 1939 - July 8, 1942

Şükrü Saraçoğlu
July 8, 1942 - March 9, 1943
March 9, 1943 - August 7, 1946

Recep Peker
August 7, 1946 - September 9, 1947

Hasan Saka
September 9, 1947 - June 10, 1948
June 10, 1948 - January 16, 1949

Şemsettin Günlaltay
January 16, 1949 - May 22, 1950

Adnan Menderes
May 22, 1950 - March 9, 1951
March 9, 1951 - May 17, 1954
May 17, 1954 - December 9, 1955
December 9, 1955 - November 25, 1957
November 25, 1957 - May 27, 1960

General Cemal Gürsel - Chairman of the National Unity Committee (Military Rule)
May 27, 1960 - January 5, 1961
January 5, 1961 - October 27, 1961

İsmet İnönü
October 27, 1961 - June 25, 1962
June 25, 1962 - December 25, 1963
December 25, 1963 - February 20, 1965

Suat Hayri Ürgüplü
February 20, 1965 - October 27, 1965

Süleyman Demirel
October 27, 1965 - November 3, 1969
November 3, 1969 - March 6, 1970
March 6, 1970 - March 21, 1971

Nihat Erim
March 26, 1971 - December 11, 1971
December 11, 1971 - April 17, 1972

Ferit Melen
April 17, 1972 - April 15, 1973

Naim Talu
April 15, 1973 - January 25, 1974

Bülent Ecevit
January 25, 1974 - November 17, 1974

Sadi Irmak
November 17, 1974 - March 31, 1975
Türkiye held a constitutional referendum on April 16, 2017. One of the proposed changes to the constitution called for abolishing the prime minister's office after the next presidential election. The Turkish electorate approved the proposed changes. Thus, after the presidential election on June 18, 2018, the prime ministry was abolished on July 9, 2018, and Binali Yıldırım was Türkiye's last prime minister.

**Note:** Turkish leaders with an American connection are:
President Süleyman Demirel was an Eisenhower Fellow in 1954 and received The Eisenhower Medal for Leadership Service in 1992.

Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, graduate of the American school Robert College in İstanbul in 1944, who spent three months in the U.S. as a guest journalist for the Winston - Salem Journal in North Carolina in 1955 on a State Department Fellowship. He also received a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship Scholarship in 1957 to study at Harvard University for eight months.

President Turgut Özal was employed as a consultant to the World Bank in Washington, DC, from 1971 to 1973.

Prime Minister Tansu Çiller, a graduate of the American school Robert College in İstanbul in 1967, resided in the U.S. in the 1970s for her master’s degree in economics from the University of New Hampshire, her doctorate in economics from the University of Connecticut, and postdoctoral studies at Yale University. She later taught economics at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The children of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Ministers Tansu Çiller and Mesut Yılmaz studied at American universities or worked in the U.S.
Chapter 3 | Bilateral State and Private Visits by Leaders

Note: The list of visits does not include meetings between the leaders of Türkiye and the United States during the UN General Assemblies.

Before 1923:

The first President of the United States to visit İstanbul was Ulysses S. Grant in March 1878, during his world tour after he left the presidency. President Grant visited Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II in İstanbul from Jerusalem, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. In İstanbul, Grant learned that Ottoman military officers studied his military campaigns during the American Civil War. He also visited Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s stable of purebred Arabian stallions. The Sultan presented two of his Arabian horses as a gift to President Grant, who was an excellent equestrian. However, Grant was critical of how the Ottoman government treated its people and the class and gender divisions in society. For more information on Grant’s visit, Ron Chernow’s “Grant” and Ronald C. White’s “American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant.”

As a teenager, the future 26th president of the United States, Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt, Jr., visited the Ottoman Middle East (Egypt, Beirut, and the Holy Land) in 1872. Later in life he expressed his disdain about the Ottomans. Some of his remarks are, “I have always regretted that the nations of Western Europe could not themselves put an end to the rule of the Turk, and supplant with some other nationality.” “Spain and Turkey are the two powers I would rather smash than any in the world.” He also wrote how annoyed he was that European powers had not intervened in the Ottoman Empire to protect the Armenians. The Boston-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions heavily influenced Teddy Roosevelt’s attitude towards the Ottomans. Source: “The American Missionary Network and Theodore Roosevelt’s Middle East Policy’ by David Grantham in American Diplomacy / Righteous Foreign Policy, October 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Leader</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 28 – February 27, 1954</td>
<td>President Celal Bayar’s official visit to Washington, DC. After addressing the U.S. Congress on January 29, he visited Princeton, NJ; New York, NY; Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio; Chicago, IL; San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Dallas, TX; and Raleigh, NC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31 – June 5, 1954</td>
<td>Prime Minister Adnan Menderes’s official visit to Washington, DC, to discuss economic and financial matters.</td>
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<td>Date Range</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 7-9, 1959</td>
<td>Prime Minister Adnan Menderes attended CENTO Ministerial Meeting in Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6-7, 1959</td>
<td>President Dwight D. Eisenhower paid an informal visit to Ankara.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 24-25, 1963</td>
<td>Prime Minister İsmet İnönü attended funeral of President John F. Kennedy in Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21-23, 1964</td>
<td>Prime Minister İnönü paid an informal visit to Washington, DC. Also visited Williamsburg, VA and New York, NY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2-13, 1967</td>
<td>President Cevdet Sunay’s state visit to Washington, DC. Afterwards visited Philadelphia, PA; Cape Kennedy, FL; Palm Springs, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, CA; Kansas City, KS; Chicago, IL; Detroit and Lansing, MI; and Niagara Falls, and New York, NY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31 – April 1, 1969</td>
<td>Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel attended President Eisenhower’s funeral and met with President Richard Nixon in Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18-23, 1972</td>
<td>Prime Minister İsmail Nihat Erim’s official visit to Washington, DC. Also visited New York, NY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30-31, 1978</td>
<td>Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit attended North Atlantic Alliance Summit conference in Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1-5, 1985</td>
<td>Prime Minister Turgut Özal’s official working visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2-8, 1987</td>
<td>Prime Minister Turgut Özal’s private visit to Washington, DC. Met with President Reagan on February 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 10, 1987</td>
<td>Prime Minister Özal had triple-bypass heart surgery in Houston, Texas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 5, 1987</td>
<td>Prime Minister Özal had eye surgery in Houston, Texas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26 – July 3, 1988</td>
<td>President Kenan Evren’s state visit to Washington, DC. Also visited New York, NY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25, 1990</td>
<td>President Turgut Özal private visit to Washington, DC., during which he met with President George Herbert Walker Bush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23-25, 1991</td>
<td>President Özal private visit to Washington, DC. during which he again met with President George Herbert Walker Bush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20-22, 1991</td>
<td>President George Herbert Walker Bush’s visit to Ankara and İstanbul, where he met with President Özal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 10-12, 1992</td>
<td>Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel official working visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28-30, 1992</td>
<td>President Özal private visit to Washington, DC. during which he met with President George Herbert Walker Bush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8, 1993</td>
<td>President Özal met with President William J. Clinton in Washington, DC, during a private visit. Also visited Ft. Lauderdale, FL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14-18, 1993</td>
<td>Prime Minister Tansu Ciller met President Clinton during a private visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14, 1994</td>
<td>Prime Minister Ciller met President Clinton during a private visit to Washington, DC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17-20, 1995</td>
<td>Prime Minister Ciller private visit to Washington, DC, during which he met with President Clinton. Also visited New York, New York and Houston, Texas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
October 18, 1995  President Demirel working visit to Washington, DC.

March 27-30, 1996  President Demirel working visit to Washington, DC.

December 18-21, 1997  Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz working visit to Washington, DC.

April 23-25, 1999  President Demirel attended NATO’s 50th Anniversary Summit in Washington, DC.

September 26-29, 1999  Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit official working visit to Washington, DC. Also visited New York, NY.

November 15-19, 1999  President William J. Clinton’s state visit to Ankara and attended the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Summit meeting in Istanbul. Also visited Ephesus, and the areas impacted by the Izmit earthquake in August 1999.

November 15, 1999  President William J. Clinton was the first American president to address the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

September 7, 2000  President Ahmet Necdet Sezer met with President Clinton at the Millennium Summit in New York, NY.

January 14-18, 2002  Prime Minister Ecevit working visit to Washington, DC.

December 10, 2002  Following the AK Party’s electoral victories in November, President George W. Bush welcomed Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Chairman of the AK Party to the White House. Bush affirmed standing “side by side” with Türkiye and highlighted supporting Türkiye’s efforts of the time to join the EU.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 27-28, 2004</td>
<td>Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan working visit to Washington, DC. Also visited New York, NY.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9-11, 2004</td>
<td>Prime Minister Erdoğan met with President George W. Bush during the G-8 Economic Summit at Sea Island, GA. Also attended the funeral of former President Reagan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7-8, 2005</td>
<td>Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan working visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30 – October 2, 2006</td>
<td>Prime Minister Erdoğan working visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 4-5, 2007</td>
<td>Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan working visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 7-8, 2008</td>
<td>President Abdullah Gül working visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 14-15, 2008</td>
<td>Prime Minister Erdoğan attended the G-20 Economic Summit in Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5-7, 2009</td>
<td>President Barack Obama’s first bilateral trip abroad was to Türkiye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2009</td>
<td>President Barack Obama addressed the Turkish Grand National Assembly highlighting both nations’ struggle to democracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 24-25, 2009</td>
<td>Prime Minister Erdoğan attended the G-20 Economic Summit in Pittsburgh, PA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12-13, 2010</td>
<td>Prime Minister Erdoğan attended the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 7, 2010</td>
<td>Prime Minister Erdoğan working visit to Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 20-21, 2012</td>
<td>President Gül attended the NATO Summit in Chicago, IL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May 14-17, 2013  Prime Minister Erdoğan working visit to Washington, DC.

March 31 – April 1, 2016  President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC.

August 1, 2016  General Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited his Turkish counterpart, General Hulusi Akar, chief of the Turkish General Staff, in Ankara to show support as “one friend making sure another was well after a traumatic experience” in the July 15th coup attempt.

General Dunford was the first senior American official and international leader to visit Turkey after the attempted coup. The general also met with Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and Ismail Kahraman, the Grand National Assembly speaker. Source: Aug. 1, 2016 | By Jim Garamone, DOD News.

August 25, 2016  Vice President Joe Biden visited Turkey to show U.S. support for the Turkish government after the attempted coup.

May 16, 2017  President Erdoğan official working visit to Washington, DC.

November 12-13, 2019  President Erdoğan working visit to Washington, DC. President Trump hosted a meeting for President Erdoğan at the White House to talk with five Republican senators about the mood in Congress regarding Türkiye’s acquisition of the Russian S-400 air defense system and U.S. Kurdish allies in Syria. The five senators were Chairman of the Foreign Relation Committee Jim Risch of Idaho, Ted Cruz of Texas, Rick Scott of Florida, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, and Joni Ernst of Iowa. The meeting between President Erdoğan and the five senators was contentious, with nothing resolved.
Chapter 4 | A List of Turkish and U.S. Ambassadors

Note: Normal diplomatic relations between Türkiye and the U.S. were not established until February 17, 1927. **Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol served as the U.S. High Commissioner in İstanbul from 1919 to 1927 when İstanbul was under Allied military occupation and in the first years of the Turkish Republic before U.S. recognition.**

**Turkish Ambassadors**

**Ahmet Muhtar Mollaoğlu**  
November 28, 1927 to April 20, 1934

**Aydın Yeğen**  
November 1, 1974 to April 1, 1975

**Mehmet Münir Ertegün**  
June 18, 1934 to November 1, 1944

**Melih Esenbel**  
April 1, 1975 to July 14, 1979

**Hüseyin Ragıp Baydur**  
March 16, 1945 to August 27, 1948

**Şükrü Elekdağ**  
July 23, 1979 to June 28, 1989

**Feridun Cemal Erkin**  
August 11, 1948 to June 15, 1955

**Nüzhet Kandemir**  
August 14, 1989 to April 15, 1998

**Ali Haydar Görk**  
May 31, 1955 to April 19, 1957

**Baki İlkin**  
April 17, 1998 to September 18, 2001

**Suat Hayri Ürgüplü**  
August 27, 1957 to March 23, 1960

**Faruk Loğoğlu**  
September 24, 2001 to December 26, 2005

**Melih Esenbel**  
March 24, 1960 to October 28, 1960

**Nabi Şensoy**  
January 1, 2006 to January 17, 2010

**Bülent Uşakligil**  
November 1, 1960 to June 20, 1962

**Namık Tan**  
February 17, 2010 to March 31, 2014

**Turgut Menemencioğlu**  
April 24, 1962 to January 2, 1967

**Serdar Kılıç**  
April 14, 2014 to March 14, 2021

**Melih Esenbel**  
January 9, 1967 to November 1, 1974

**Hasan Murat Mercan**  
March 15, 2021 to present
A Chronicle of Turkish American Relations: 1923 - 2023

Chapter 4 | A List of Turkish and U.S. Ambassadors

U.S. Ambassadors

**Joseph C. Grew**
October 12, 1927 to March 13, 1932
*Resided in İstanbul.

**Charles Hitchcock Sherrill**
May 20, 1932 to March 23, 1933
*Resided in İstanbul.

**Robert Peet Skinner**
October 16, 1933 to January 16, 1936
*Resided in İstanbul.

**John Van Antwerp MacMurray**
March 16, 1936 to November 28, 1941 *The last American ambassador to reside in İstanbul and the first American ambassador to reside in Ankara, moving there in 1937.

**Laurence A. Steinhardt**
March 10, 1942 to April 2, 1945

**Edwin C. Wilson**
June 11, 1945 to August 20, 1948

**George Wadsworth**
October 1, 1948 to January 2, 1952

**George C. McGhee**
January 15, 1952 to June 19, 1953

**Avra M. Warren**
September 17, 1953 to February 17, 1956

**Fletcher Warren**
June 13, 1956 to November 15, 1960

**Raymond A. Hare**
April 5, 1961 to August 27, 1965

**Parker T. Hart**
October 11, 1965 to October 3, 1968

**Robert Komer**
December 3, 1968 to May 7, 1969

**William J. Handley**
July 1, 1969 to April 19, 1973

**William B. Macomber**
May 16, 1973 to June 15, 1977

**Ronald L. Spiers**
July 12, 1977 to January 11, 1980

**James W. Spain**
February 26, 1980 to August 16, 1981

**Robert Strausz-Hupe**
September 7, 1981 to May 18, 1989

**Morton I. Abramowitz**
August 1, 1989 to July 25, 1991

**Richard Clark Barkley**
November 8, 1991 to December 15, 1994

**Marc Grossman**
January 3, 1995 to
June 1, 1997

Mark Robert Parris
November 12, 1997 to
September 8, 2000

W. Robert Pearson
September 21, 2000 to
July 23, 2003

Eric S. Edelman
August 29, 2003 to
June 19, 2005

Ross Wilson
December 8, 2005 to
August 9, 2008

James Franklin Jeffrey
December 3, 2008 to
July 31, 2010

Francis J. Ricciardone
January 28, 2011 to
July 8, 2014

John R. Bass
October 20, 2014 to
October 15, 2017

David M. Satterfield
August 28, 2019 to
January 7, 2022

Jeffry Lane Flake
January 26, 2022 to present
Chapter 5 | Turkish American Elected Officials

Note: Up to October 29, 2023, only fourteen Turkish Americans are known to have been elected to public office. Only one Turkish American has been elected to state-level office, whereas the other thirteen were elected in local jurisdictions. As of this date, no Turkish American has won an election to serve in Congress.

Sel Erder Yackley is believed to be the first Turkish American elected to public office. She was elected to the Elementary School Board in Ottawa, Illinois in 1976 and served until 1987. Later, she served on the elected Illinois Valley Community College Board of Directors from 1987 to 1997, a position covering seven counties.

Malik Tunador was elected to a seat on the Council of the Thornburg Borough of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, in November 1994 and served for four years.

Mehmet “Matt” Yar was elected to the Bloomfield County Education Board in New Jersey in 1998 and served until 2001.

Jay Karahan (Republican) was elected in November 2002 and was sworn in the following January as Judge of Harris County Criminal Court-at-Law No. 8. He was reelected to that office three times and served until December 31, 2018, when he retired from active judicial service.

Esin Busche (Republican) was elected as a Naperville Township Trustee in DuPage County, Illinois, in 2005 and was reelected several times.

Ali Paksoy (Republican) was the first Turkish American elected to a state-level position. He was elected District Court Judge for the 27B Judicial District of North Carolina, which presides over Cleveland and Lincoln counties, in 2006. He has been reelected to this position in 2010, 2014, 2018, and 2022.

Dr. Erdem Ural was elected to the Stoughton School Committee in Stoughton, Massachusetts, in 2008. He served in that position until 2011. In 2012, Ural was again elected to the School Committee until 2015.

John Alpay (Republican) was an elected Trustee for the Capistrano Unified School District for Area 3, the ninth-largest school district in California, from 2010 until 2016.

Edward Kranick (Republican), the son of a Turkish mother, was elected as a supervisor of the Town Board of Delafield in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, in 2015 and was reelected in 2017, 2019, and 2021. He was elected Chairperson of Delafield’s Town Board in 2023. (Note: The Town of Delafield is a separate municipality from the City of Delafield, also in Waukesha County.)

Kemal Bozkurt was elected to the board of Lawrence Public Schools (Massachusetts) in 2015 and served until 2016.
Tayfun Selen (Republican) was elected to the Chatham Township Council in Morris Country, New Jersey, in 2017. He was elected Mayor of Chatham Township in 2019, thereby becoming the first Turkish American to serve as a municipality mayor. In February 2020, he filled a vacancy on the Morris County Board of Commissioners and later, in November of the same year, won a three-term as a County Commissioner. He served as Director of the Morris County Board of Commissioners in 2022. He was reelected as a Morris County Commissioner in 2023.

Hacıbey ‘Hacı’ Çatalbaşoğlu (Independent) was elected to the Board of Alders for Ward 1 in New Haven, Connecticut, in 2017. He was 19 years old and a junior at Yale University. He was the youngest Turkish American ever to run and be elected to public office and one of the youngest Alders to ever serve on the Board of Alders in New Haven.

Ayça (Şirvanç) Sawa (Democrat) was elected City Comptroller of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a nonpartisan position, in 2020. She is the first Turkish American to become a Chief Financial Officer for a major American city and the second woman elected as a city official in Milwaukee.

Onur Arugaslan was elected to serve a six-year term as a trustee (nonpartisan) on the Mattawan Consolidated School Board of Education in Michigan in 2022.
Chapter 6 | Highlights of Influential People and Stories of Interest

Part I: The First 50 Years, 1923-1973

Author’s note – May 5, 2024: I want to thank Barış Ornarlı, Michael Stoil, and Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı for reviewing my drafts for historical accuracy. I also want to thank Crystal Staebell for her help in researching the material for this chapter. Part II of Chapter 6 will be uploaded in June, 2024.

1920s

1923 Asa Kent Jennings (September 20, 1877 – January 27, 1933) was an American private citizen who played a role of historic significance during the Turkish War of Independence and the early years of the Republic of Türkiye. He was a trusted ally of Mustafa Kemal ( Atatürk ) and was friends with Turkish cabinet ministers and parliamentarians. He also was a hero to the Greeks and Armenians. He was the best-known American in the eastern Mediterranean at the time.

- Jennings, a Methodist minister from upstate New York, was the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) field representative in İzmir when the city was liberated by Mustafa Kemal Pasha ( Atatürk ) and the Turkish Nationalists in September 1922. He was a hunchback due to Pott's disease, barely 5 feet in height, who outlived the expectations of his doctors. As a humble but determined, pragmatic, and principled man, Jennings devoted the last ten years of his life to helping the Turkish people modernize their country and strengthen relations with the United States, States, in spite of strongly suspicious sentiments held by many Turkish people towards the West and Christianity. He undertook this mission without seeking financial gain during challenging times of substantial anti-Turkish prejudice in the U.S. and ultranationalism in Türkiye. Although very few Turks and Americans know of him today, his spirit has inspired generations of Americans following him who shared his vision and devotion for Türkiye.

- He worked diligently advocating for U.S. recognition of the new Turkish republic and the need for American missionary establishments in Türkiye to focus on providing social services rather than proselyting to Muslims. He also helped in the efforts to turn around the American image of the "Terrible Turk."

- President Mustafa Kemal ( Atatürk ) had asked Jennings to form social organizations in Türkiye for boys based on the YMCA model, called the Turkish American clubs. Jennings successfully found funding for these clubs
and other social services from the YMCA and American philanthropists interested in the success of Türkiye's modernization program.

- This informal group of philanthropists created by Jennings became known as the American Friends of Turkey (AFOT). AFOT would later be incorporated as a legal entity in 1930.

- Furthermore, Jennings’ passion for Mustafa Kemal’s (Atatürk) reform and modernization programs also engaged the interest of the prestigious Rockefeller Foundation. (The Rockefeller Foundation and the American Red Cross had initially supported the establishment of the American Hospital in İstanbul by Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol in 1920.)

- Within days of the arrival of Jennings and his family in İzmir to oversee YMCA operations, he played a pivotal humanitarian role in the Turkish War of Independence or “Greco-Turkish War.” As Turkish forces advanced on the city in August 1922, İzmir was overwhelmed with non-Muslim refugees. In dealing with the refugee crisis, Jennings set up the American Relief Committee to provide food and medical services. The naval ships of France, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States off the Aegean coast, however, refused to take on board fleeing civilians who were not their citizens.

- As the refugee situation became more desperate and with the U.S. Consul General in İzmir George Horton ordered to evacuate the city, Jennings took matters into his own hands. Without the authority of the U.S. government or any other institution, Jennings and his translator bravely drove his YMCA Chevy to the headquarters of the Turkish Nationalist Commander Mustafa Kemal Pasha to discuss allowing the civilian refugees to leave İzmir.

- Mustafa Kemal Pasha, intrigued by Jennings's courage, granted the meeting and agreed to evacuate civilians under certain conditions. Ships involved in the evacuation could not fly the Greek flag; men of military age (17-45) could not be evacuated; rescue ships could not be tied up at the İzmir wharf; and Jennings only had seven days for the operation.

- Jennings's next task was to persuade the Greek government to provide ships for the evacuation. However, Greek officials did not share Jennings's sense of urgency. They did not trust Mustafa Kemal Pasha's word about safe passage. Frustrated, Jennings issued an ultimatum that if Greek ships were not available for rescue, he would tell the world that the Greek government was not concerned about the welfare of Greeks and others in İzmir. His blackmail worked. The Greek government ordered all Greek merchant ships near the coast of Anatolia to be placed under Jennings's command. Source: American Diplomacy / Insight and Analysis from Foreign Affairs Practitioners and Scholars, "One Man Changed Greece and Turkey Forever," (March 2010) by Roger Jennings.
Jennings sailed on the first ship into İzmir Bay under the protection of the U.S. Navy. American and Greek sailors honored him with the title "Admiral and Commodore." Lt. Commander Halsey Powell, the senior U.S. naval officer in the area who broke regulations to support Jennings' efforts, said: "The ships were brought into the harbor under the command of Mr. Jennings of the Y.M.C.A. and were escorted and loaded by officers and men of American destroyers. It was only through the energy and zeal and stubborn insistence of Mr. Jennings that these ships were obtained." Source: The New York Times (August 9, 1925), "BOYS CLUBS IN TURKEY ARE OUTGROWTH OF REFUGEE AID" / "Asa K. Jennings of the Y.M.C.A., Who Led in Removal of Greeks from Smyrna, Is Responsible for New Organizations in Six Turkish Cities."

Due to Jennings' efforts, 350,000 non-Muslims who held Jennings in reverence departed from İzmir to the Greek Islands and the Greek mainland. The breakdown was 300,000 Greeks and 50,000 Armenians and Jews. The Turkish Nationalists extended the deadline and rescinded the condition that ships could not be tied at the pier. Once the evacuation of non-Muslims from İzmir was completed, Jennings, with the blessings of Turkish authorities, organized evacuations of non-Muslims from other Turkish ports on ships provided by the Greek government. In total, Asa Kent Jennings helped to evacuate 1,250,000 people.

For his efforts in evacuating Greeks from Anatolia, Jennings was recognized by the King of Greece and was awarded with Greece's highest civilian honor, The Golden Cross of St. Xavier, and the highest military decoration, The Medal of Military Merit. Source: American Diplomacy / Insight and Analysis from Foreign Affairs Practitioners and Scholars, "One Man Changed Greece and Turkey Forever," (March 2010) by Roger Jennings. Jennings was also posthumously honored by the Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, and a memorial in his honor was erected in Volvos, Greece, in 2016.

In another unique historical scene, Jennings, trusted by the Turks and Greeks, was the sole representative for both governments during the Lausanne Treaty negotiations about the prisoner-of-war exchange between the two countries. Subsequently, he successfully worked out a settlement accepted by the two countries. Source: American Diplomacy / Insight and Analysis from Foreign Affairs Practitioners and Scholars, "One Man Changed Greece and Turkey Forever," (March 2010) by Roger Jennings.

Turkish immigrants living in Detroit had an Ottoman architectural-styled fountain for their water supply, and they also sent $500,000 to Kızılay (The Red Crescent) for the welfare of orphans in Türkiye. (1923 circa)*

Unity, the first newspaper for the Turkish community in the U.S., started,
publishing three editions per month. The paper covered post-Independence War (Kurtuluş Savaşı) stories and news from Türkiye.*

*For more information about the history of the first Turks in the U.S., see TurkofAmerica Magazine’s 10th issue in 2004.

In Spring of 1923, the Grand National Assembly, in confronting the economic despair of Türkiye, revived an earlier American economic development concession known as the Chester Concession or Chester Project. The Ottoman government initially granted a concession in 1909 to the Ottoman American Development Company (OADC) to construct and maintain a railroad in eastern Anatolia and had the rights to extract minerals within 12 miles of the route for 99 years. OADC, led by retired Admiral Colby M. Chester, was part of President William Howard Taft's Secretary of State Philander Chase Knox's "Dollar Diplomacy" policy to promote democracy and stability through trade and investment. OADC withdrew from the project in 1911 due to a lack of financing, European and domestic opposition, and bureaucratic red tape. Admiral Chester's son, Arthur Chester, was involved in the second initiative in 1923 but, like the first attempt, failed to find the necessary funding. Consequently, the Grand National Assembly invalidated the agreement at the end of the year. The failure of the project left a bitter taste in Turkish-American relations. Source: The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship by Barış Ornarlı, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, p.15.

Acclaimed American journalist and editor Isaac F. Marcosson (1876-1961), born in Louisville, Kentucky, wrote a series of articles for The Saturday Evening Post about the new Türkiye after traveling there in the summer of 1923. Marcosson’s interview* with Gazi Mustafa Kemal was published as “KEMAL PASHA” on October 20. This is what Gazi Mustafa Kemal said about Americans and the United States in this article:

- “The ideal of the United States is our ideal. Our National Pact, promulgated by the Grand National Assembly in January, 1920, is precisely like your Declaration of Independence. It only demands freedom of our Turkish land from the invader and control of our own destiny.”
- “Between Turkey and American as sister democracies there should be the closest relations.”
- “In the field of economic relations Turkey and the United States can work together to the greatest mutual advantage. Our rich and varied national resources should prove attractive to American capital. We welcome American assistance in our development because, unlike the capital of any other country, American money is free from the political intrigue that animates the dealings of European nations with us.”
• “All my life I have had inspiration in the lives and deeds of Washington and Lincoln. Between the original Thirteen States and the new Turkey is a curious kinship. Your early Americans threw off the British yoke, Turkey has thrown off the old yoke of empire with all the graft and corruption that it carried, and what was worse, the selfish meddling of other nations. American struggled through to independence and prosperity. We are now in the midst of travail which is witnessing the birth of a nation. With American help we achieve our aim.”

• “Do you know why Washington and Lincoln have always appealed to me? I will tell why. They worked solely for the glory and emancipation of the United States, while most other Presidents seemed to have worked for their own deification. The highest form of public service is unselfish effort.”

• When asked by Marcosson about specific aid that the United States can provide to the new Türkiye, one example that Gazi Mustafa Kemal gave was in agriculture. He said “Turkey is essentially a pastoral land. We must stand or fall by our agriculture. . . We must develop a whole new science of farming, first through the establishment of agricultural schools, in which America can help. . .”

Marcosson also spoke with Gazi Mustafa Kemal’s wife, Latife (Usaki) Hanım, who communicated in English and expressed her admiration for American poet and educator Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

* During the interview, Gazi Mustafa Kemal spoke Turkish while his prime minister, Rauf Orbay, who served in the position from July 12, 1922, to August 4, 1923, translated, despite both Kemal and Marcosson knowing French. A side note on Rauf Orbay (1881-1964): Orbay resigned as prime minister shortly after the interview. He was a distinguished Ottoman Navy officer who studied in England and Germany. In 1903, he visited the United States. He met with President Theodore Roosevelt to obtain permission to inspect the U.S. Navy’s submarine station in Newport, Rhode Island. Not only was he granted permission, but he left a very favorable impression on President Roosevelt.

In another article “TURKEY IN TRANSITION” that appeared in the Saturday Evening Post on November 10, 1923, Isaac F. Marcosson interviewed Turkish nationalist, feminist, and novelist Halide Hanım in Munich who was there to meet her two sons who were on a holiday break from their studies at the University of Illinois. In addition to giving her perspective about the political scene and the new Türkiye in the interview, Halide Hanım, gave a message to the women of America. She said:

• “I hope that the bulk of American womanhood will not think that the Turkish woman is emerging from the veil and seclusion amid a cloud of cigarette smoke and nothing more. Our women have a serious realization both of the
opportunity and the responsibility that are theirs, and they will render a good
count of themselves.”
It should also be pointed out that during their exile from Türkiye, 1926-1939,
Halide Edib, who spoke fluent English, and her husband Adnan Adivar while
living in Europe lecture repeatedly in the United States.

_The Atlantic_ in its November 1923 issue printed the article “THE TURK COMES
TO TOWN” (Recorded by John Bakeless), a story of Mark O. Prentiss’s
experiences witnessing the reclaiming of İzmir by Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the
Turkish Nationalists in the previous year. Prentiss was an American engineer,
business man, and the representative of Near East Relief.

_The Atlantic_ in its December 1923 issue printed the article “MUSTAPHA
KEMAL IN THE SADDLE / THE STORY OF MARK O. PRENTISS IN A
NEW ILIAD OF GREEK HISTORY” (Recorded by John Bakeless). In the
article, Prentiss claimed to have told Mustafa Kemal Pasha that he reminded him
of President Teddy Roosevelt. Kemal Pasha... “replied that if he were to be
compared to any American, he preferred George Washington! He felt that he was
fighting for the freedom of the new Turkey as Washington had fought for
American independence.”

Madame Bey / Hiranoush Iguanian / Hjranoush Sidky Bey / Hranus Siki Hanim
(circa 1881 - January 30, 1942) of Armenian and French heritage, attended
Constantinople College for Girls (now Robert College), spoke seven languages,
mezzo-soprano opera singer, and friend of President and Mrs. William McKinley.
She was an acclaimed boxing trainer who established and ran the best-known
boxing camp in the U.S. between 1923 and 1942.

More the 14 world heavyweight boxing champions and 80 hall-of-famers attended
the camp, located in New Jersey’s Morris County (Chatham Township), including
Lou Ambers, Primo Carnera, Jack Dempsey, Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, Floyd
Paterson, Max Schmeling, and Gene Tunney. Her husband Mehmet Sidky Bey, a
Turkish Muslim, was an Ottoman diplomat assigned to Washington in the 1890s
and later became the Ottoman Consul General in New York. Their son Rustem
Bey became the first police chief of Chatham Township (Morris County, NJ). (It
is also worth noting that Chatham Township elected the first Turkish American
mayor in 2019.) Madame Bey and her husband were buried in Chatham’s Fair
Mount Cemetery without a grave marker. Decades later, the Chatham Township
Historical Society and the Turkish Consulate General in New York raised funds
for a tombstone and held a ceremony on September 20, 2020. (For more
information: Wikipedia: Madame Bey / Madame Bey’s: Home to Boxing
Legends by Gene Pantalone.)
1924 *The Atlantic* in its January 1924 issue printed the article “ACTUALITIES AT SMYRNA – MARK O. PRENTISS, AMERICAN EYEWITNESS, SPEAKS” (Recorded by John Bakeless). In the article, Prentiss further elaborated his observations and experiences after the Turkish army entered İzmir in September 1922.

On February 3, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson died. The Turkish government in Ankara did not lower the flags half-mast on government buildings to honor the death of President Wilson since the two countries had no diplomatic relations. However, Caliph Abdulmecid in İstanbul lowered Turkish flags on the palace, and his yacht, creating greater tension between the government and the caliph. Source: *Middle East Eye* by Imran Mulla / March 1, 2024.

American athletic trainer and coach Chester M. Tobin trained Türkiye’s first track and field team for the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris, July 5-27. Türkiye sent 31 athletes to the Olympics but did not win any medals. Tobin in 1944 published his book *Turkey – Key to the East* to dispel the “Terrible Turk” image in the U.S. and portray the “real Turks and their vibrant progressive nation.”

1925 American garment manufacturer Arthur Nash (June 26, 1870 – October 30, 1927) pledged $120,000 to Hamdullah Suphi Tanriover (1885-June 10, 1966), president of Türk Ocakları (Turkish Hearths), towards building a new national headquarters in Ankara. Source: *The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey* by Rifat N. Bali, pp. 130-148. A successful businessman, Nash was noted for applying the Christian "Golden Rule" principle in business practices. He was an advocate for religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue. Source: Wikipedia: Arthur Nash (businessman). In addition to contributing to Türk Ocakları, Nash supported President Mustafa Kemal's ( Atatürk) modernization policy for Türkiye through generous financial contributions to Asa K. Jennings's social services programs in the mid-1920s.

Established a consulate general in New York. Cedal Munif Bey was the appointed consul general.

1926 Former U.S. Consul General in İzmir George Horton published his book *The Blight of Asia* about the destruction of İzmir and the plight of the Christian population during the Turkish War of Independence/Greco-Turkish War.

- Horton, who had as the U.S. Consul General in İzmir during two periods (1911-1917 and 1919-1922, during the Greek administration of the city), was a fanatic panhellenist.
- His account in the book of İzmir's destruction was controversial because of accusations against him of holding anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim sentiments.
• In his book, he blamed Turkish troops for burning İzmir, criticized Western powers for not intervening to aid the Christian populations, and highlighted that losing İzmir to the Turks was the final act ending Christianity in Asia Minor which was not the case.
• Further, he proclaimed that Western Christians, especially the American missionary community, were delusional in believing that they were advancing proselytizing Christianity in the Muslim world.

The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago under the direction of Hans H. von der Osten began the excavation of a Hittite mound near the village of Alisar in the province of Yozgat. Other Hittite sites were excavated in later years. Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 178.

1927

On January 18, the U.S. Senate failed to approve the Treaty of Amity and Commerce Between the United States and Turkey, also known as the Turkish American Treaty of Lausanne or the other Lausanne Treaty. Although 50 senators voted in favor of ratification, the vote was still six short of the required two-thirds of the Senate.
• The treaty had been signed on August 6, 2023, in Lausanne, Switzerland by the Turkish Nationalist representative Ismet Inonu and U.S. Department of State official Joseph C. Grew who would later become the first U.S. ambassador to Türkiye. However, the Coolidge Administration delayed in forwarding the treaty for Senate approval due to the strong “Terrible Turk” image in the U.S.
• Senator William H. King (D-Utah) led the fight against ratification in the Senate while the principal lobbying group was the American Committee Opposed to the Lausanne Treaty. This committee was previously the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia (ACIA) and would later become the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).
• Other public figures opposing the treaty were
  o Former U.S. ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire: Abram I. Elkus (October 2, 1916 – February 20, 1917), Henry Morgenthau (December 11, 1913 – February 1, 1916), and Oscar S. Straus (October 15, 1898 – December 20, 1899 and July 1, 1887 – June 16, 1889)
  o Prominent New York lawyer and former U.S. ambassador to Germany James W. Gerard (October 29, 1913 – February 5, 1917)
  o Prominent New York Armenian American lawyer Vahan Cardashian who had previously provided legal services to Ottoman diplomatic missions in Washington and New York before WWI
• The objections of those opposing the treaty were
Abandoning the establishment of an Armenia in Anatolia
Insufficient protection of American schools and missions
Eliminating the Capitulations under the Ottoman Empire to ensure the protection of American citizens


- Public officials and organizations pressing for the ratification of the treaty were

  - U.S. High Commissioner in İstanbul Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol
  - U.S. Chamber of Commerce and American businesses
  - Secretary Foreign Department of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)* James L. Barton
  - General Secretary of the International Committee of the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) John R. Mott
  - YMCA’s Administrative Secretary European Area Darius A. Davis
  - YMCA’s Executive Secretary İstanbul Elbert Crandall Stevens
  - Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)
  - President of the Council on Turkish-American Relations, Inc. George Arthur Plimpton
  - Vice President of the Council on Turkish-American Relations, Inc. Professor Philip Marshall Brown of Princeton University
  - Council on Turkish-American Relations, Inc. representative in Türkiye Asa Kent Jennings
  - 106 American residents in İstanbul working at Robert College, the Constantinople (İstanbul) College for Women, and ABCFM representatives and teachers at is schools in Türkiye


* It needs to be pointed out that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was a proponent in promoting the “Terrible Turk” image to the American public during the closing days of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, after World War I, ABCFM continued the campaign of demonizing the “Turk” in addition to advocating for an American mandate in Anatolia for the creation of an Armenian state. However, after Mustafa Kemal Pasha’s victory in the Turkish War of Independence, ABCFM had a complete turn-around of its earlier stance and began supporting the Turkish Nationalists and lobbying for U.S. recognition of the new Turkish Republic.

- Commenting on the conflict in the Senate over ratification in his book The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939 (pages
historian Roger R. Trask summarized seven reasons used by Joseph C. Grew, then Undersecretary of State, to justify ratification of the treaty with the Republic of Türkiye. Grew originally described these justifications in a contemporary letter to Senator Charles Curtis of Kansas:

1. “‘Old treaties with Turkey are out of date and could not be used to protect American interests;
2. All of the powers except the United States had recognized the abolition of the capitulations;
3. All Americans in Turkey favored ratification of the treaty;
4. Defeat of the treaty would harm rather than aid the Greek and Armenian minorities because the United States would not be in a position to give them even moral support;
5. Territory for an Armenian national home could be detached from Turkey only by war;
6. The treaty would give Americans treatment equal to that accorded to nationals of the twenty-seven other governments which had concluded treaties with Turkey;
7. The Turkey of Kemal Atatürk was no worse than the Turkey of Abdul Hamid. ‘If there was no ethical impropriety in our having formal and diplomatic relations with the Governments of Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks, why should this impropriety be considered to exist now?’”

- Trask also wrote that “Grew reflected the State Department conclusion that a realistic attitude toward conditions in Turkey was necessary. The moralistic thinking of the opposition, based partly on inaccurate information, would result in little good and perhaps considerable harm to the very groups which it sought to protect.” (page 43)
- Some of the American papers approving the treaty’s defeat were the Wheeling Intelligencer, Tampa Tribune, and the Christian Science Monitor. Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, pp. 45-46.

The Turkish Welfare Association in New York (Ottoman/Türk Teavün Cemiyeti) with branches in Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland countered anti-Turkish propaganda during the public debate on the treaty. This association adopted the role of the first Turkish American lobby in the U.S. *For more information on
the history of the first Turks in the U.S., *TurkofAmerica Magazine*'s 10th issue in 2004.

Despite the Senate’s failure to ratify the Treaty of Amity and Commerce on January 18, the Coolidge Administration and the Turkish Republic exchanged notes to establish diplomatic relations on February 17. The Senate eventually ratified a similar version entitled Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between the United States of American and the Turkish Republic on April 22, 1930, almost seven years after the signing of the initial treaty in 1923. The American Committee Opposed to the Lausanne Treaty also fought against Senate approval of Joseph C. Grew as the first U.S. Ambassador to Türkiye. Ambassador James W. Gerard representing the committee wrote “it is difficult to understand why we should send an ‘Ambassador’ to Turkey—a primitive Asiatic country, with a population of 5,000,000, when we have reduced to a Legation our Embassy to Austria.” Source: *The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship* by Baris Ornarli, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, p.23.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha was featured on the front cover of *Time Magazine* (February 21, 1927). Mustafa Kemal Pasha was earlier featured on *Time Magazine*'s front cover on March 14, 1923.

1928


On March 26, 1928, 129 years after the U.S.S. George Washington became the first American naval ship to visit İstanbul, the U.S.S. Raleigh became the first American naval ship to visit the city after the founding of the Republic of Türkiye. Source: *The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship* by Baris Ornarli, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, p.144.

March 31st marked the beginning of a series of severe earthquakes in İzmir that continued for over two weeks. The American Red Cross contributed $5,000 to the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) for the purchase of tents for earthquake victims, and five American tobacco companies also raised funds. President Calvin Coolidge sent a message of sympathy to President Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk),...

Upon the request of Ambassador Joseph C. Grew, American banker, financier, and philanthropist J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr. (September 7, 1867 – March 13, 1943), while in Istanbul in April, donated $6,000 to the American Hospital, which was having financial difficulties. Source: *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939*, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 173.

Frederick Bruce Thomas, the son of formerly enslaved African-Americans from Mississippi, who established a high-class night club Maxim in the Sisli district of Istanbul in 1921, died penniless on June 12 and was buried in Istanbul’s Pangaltı Catholic Cemetery. Thomas became known as the Sultan of Jazz and the Black Russian. Previously, he was a successful entrepreneur in Moscow but fled to Istanbul along with thousands of others from the Bolshevik Revolution. In addition to Maxim, Thomas established other night clubs in Istanbul and Ankara.

The first 4th of July Reception was hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Türkiye at Ambassador Joseph C. Grew’s summer residence in Yenikoy, Istanbul, with over 150 guests attending. (Source: *The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship* by Baris Ornarli, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, p. 105.)

Morris Schinasi, an illiterate Sephardic Jewish immigrant from humble origins in Manisa (in present-day Türkiye) who was born on April 27, 1855, and made a fortune in the American tobacco business, died in New York City on September 10. Schinasi, who immigrated to the United States in 1890, invented the cigarette rolling machine. He exhibited his invention at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Later, he and his brother Solomon produced ready-made cigarettes in New York City, 120th Street and Broadway, under the brand name "Natural." They used both Turkish and Virginia tobacco for their cigarettes. Their factory employed 200 Turkish Jewish immigrants. In July 1908, Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II had honored Schinasi with the Medjidie Medal for his business success. In 1916, they sold their cigarette company to the American Tobacco Company.

- After Schinasi's death, his widow Laurette Schinasi, also a former Ottoman citizen from Salonica, used funds from the Schinasi inheritance to finance 80% of the construction of the Moris Şinasi Çocuk Hastahanesi (Morris Schinasi Children's Hospital) in Manisa. The hospital opened on August 15, 1933, and is still operating. The Schinasi inheritance continues to provide funds for healthcare costs, and an international children's health association in

- Schinasi built a 12,000-square-foot marble mansion at 351 Riverside Drive in 1907. It was designated a New York City Landmark in 1974 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The mansion is the last remaining detached single-family house in Manhattan and is still being used as a residence. Source: Wikipedia: Schinasi Mansion.

Four American doctors were licensed by the Turkish government in 1928. They were Dr. Lorrin Shepard, Dr. Albert W. Dewey, Dr. Wilson F. Dodd, and Dr. William L. Nute. Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 172.

1929

The Turkish Aviation League awarded its first medal to American aviator Charles A. Lindbergh, for being the first pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. The Aviation Medal was presented to his mother, Evangeline Lindbergh, who was teaching chemistry at the Constantinople Women’s College. Source: The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship by Baris Ornarli, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, p. 211.

1930s

1930

On June 11, an informal group supporting Türkiye known as the American Friends of Turkey held a dinner meeting at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City to discuss incorporation of the group. The dinner was hosted by William H. Hoover (August 18, 1849 – February 25, 1932), Chairman of the Hoover Vacuum Cleaner Company, and attended by over 25 Americans. Source: The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey by Rifat N. Bali, p. 256.

- On July 12, the (first) American Friends of Turkey (AFOT)* was incorporated in New York with William H. Hoover (August 18, 1849 – February 25, 1932), Chairman of the Hoover Vacuum Cleaner Company, elected as president and Asa K. Jennings as Executive Vice President.
- The newly elected AFOT president, William H. Hoover, also established a trust fund of $100,000 for AFOT.
- Among the 18 board members were individuals representing prestigious U.S. institutions: James E. West, Boy Scouts of America; Dr. John H. Finley, president of the National Child Association of America and associate editor of The New York Times; Martha Finley, president of the...
AFOT’s office was on 19 West 44th Street in Manhattan. An Ankara office was also established.

AFOT’s bylaws stated that its objective was “to cooperate with the Turkish People, their institutions, organizations, and government in various ways acceptable to all concerned, to promote goodwill and understanding between the people of America and the people of Turkey.”

After its incorporation, the New York Herald Tribune printed an article praising the new organization for furthering “an entirely new movement in America and Turkey....”


U.S. Ambassador Joseph C. Grew said this about Asa Kent Jennings and AFOT: “...These American friends of Turkey stressed the importance of combatting the ignorance prevailing in the States relative to the Turks and their country. In fact, they pointed out that this was the main object of their organization in the States and that they hoped that these efforts would pave the way towards closer intellectual, commercial and economic relations. It was also pointed out that this object would be greatly furthered if more Turkish students went to the States. Later Jennings was received by the Gazi (Atatürk) who presented him with an autographed photograph in a silver frame and expressed his appreciation of Jenning’s work towards Turco-American friendship.” Source: The Diary of Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Groundwork for the US-Turkey Relationship by Baris Ornarli, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, p. 77.

Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol, who was the U.S. High Commissioner in İstanbul before the U.S. recognized the Republic of Türkiye, became AFOT’s president after William Hoover’s death in 1932.

*Note: A second American Friends of Turkey with the same acronym was founded by Col. Ralph E. Ropp in the 1970s, but there was no connection between the two organizations.

In fulfilling its mission, AFOT collaborated with the Turkish Ministry of Education and Turkish Educational Society (Turk Maarif Cemiyeti) by providing American educational expertise and worked with the Children’s Protection Society, National Sports Federation, and Society for Aid to Destitute Women (Yoksul Kadina Yardim Cemiyeti).

AFOT provided funding for social services such as prison reform, juvenile delinquency, and women and youth programs for the Turkish people. AFOT also funded the construction of dental clinics, libraries, day centers, and playgrounds in Türkiye.
• In the United States, AFOT gave guidance and financial assistance to Turkish university students and launched a PR campaign to change the “Terrible Turk” image held by American society.  

• Sadly, after a remarkable performance in its first years, AFOT couldn’t maintain its activities because of the Great Depression. In the 1940s, AFOT became defunct, and a new organization, the Turkish American Society, was established in New York in 1949 as the premier Turkish American association.

The construction of the national headquarters in Ankara for Turk Ocaklari (Turkish Hearths), made possible by the donation of $120,000 from American businessman Arthur Nash, was opened to the public on April 23. The cornerstone was laid by Prime Minister Ismet Inonu on March 21, 1927. Source: *The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey* by Rifat N. Bali, p. 193. Turk Ocaklari was founded in 1912 and eventually became part of Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/CHP (Republican Peoples Party).

The American Red Cross sent $2,500 to the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) for victims of a major flood in İzmir in October. Source: *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939*, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 184.

Fox Films produced a Movietone film in Türkiye with American Ambassador Joseph C. Grew introducing the President of the Turkish Republic Gazi Mustafa Kemal to the American public in November.

The American Red Cross sent $1,000 to the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) for victims of another major flood in Adana in December. Source: *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939*, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 184.

1931 American aviators John L. Polando and Russell N. Boardman set an aviation record at the time for the longest continuous distance without refueling. Polando and Boardman flew a Bellanca Special J-300 high-wing monoplane named the Cape Cod from Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, New York, departing on July 28 and landing at Yeşilköy Airport in İstanbul on July 30—establishing a straight-line distance record of 5,011.8 miles (1,065.7 km). The flight took 49.20 hours. Both President Mustafa Kemal and Prime Minister Ismet Inonu received the aviators.
AFOT donated purebred cattle to the “Gazi Farm,” the model farm established in Ankara by President Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) in 1925. An idea originated by Asa K. Jennings and four of AFOT’s founding members contributed to the donation—William H. Hoover, president of the Hoover Vacuum Cleaner Company, J.C. Penny, founder of the department store under his name, Perley A. Dutton, managing partner of J.C. Penney’s agriculture interests, and W.W. Fry, president of the N.W. Ayer & Son, the first American advertising agency. President Kemal (Atatürk) sent his autographed photograph to the donors to show his deep appreciation for the donation. Source: The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey by Rifat N. Bali, pp. 273 – 275.

The Turkish government granted permission to the Byzantine Institute of America to uncover and restore the mosaics in the Aya Sofya (Haghia Sophia). Thomas Whittemore was in charge of the project. Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, pp. 179-180.

1932

On the occasion of George Washington's 200th anniversary, February 22, President Mustafa Kemal sent a telegram to U.S. President Herbert Hoover acknowledging George Washington as a great American. He expressed his sincere friendship with President Hoover and the United States. President Mustafa Kemal also conveyed sincere wishes for prosperity and happiness. He signed the telegram as Gazi M. Kemal. Reported in the Häkimiyeti Milliye Newspaper on February 23, 1932.


A debating tour by two Turkish students—Galip Rifat and Suha Zeki—in the U.S. was organized by AFOT to combat the negative image of Türkiye. They visited over 40 colleges and universities and won the majority of their debates. Source: The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey by Rifat N. Bali, p. 305.

General Charles Hitchcock Sherrill, who served as the second U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Türkiye (May 20, 1932 – March 23, 1933) under President
Herbert Hoover, wrote a laudatory biography on Atatürk after retiring from public office.

*Washington Post Sunday Magazine's* July 31st issue featured article “The Hanim Drops Her Veil” on its front page was an interview with Turkish Ambassador Ahmet Muhtar (Mollaoglu)* “on the social, economic, and political progress of Turkish women.” Source: *The Turkish Ambassador’s Residence and The Cultural History of Washington, D.C.* by Skip Moskey, Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, and John Edward Hasse, p. 78. *After Türkiye’s Grand National Assembly adopted the “Surname Law” (“Soyadi Kanunu”) on June 21, 1934, Ambassador Muhtar took the surname of Mollaoglu.


In December, President Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), in contending with a contentious issue with the U.S., presided over a Council of Ministers meeting which decided that Türkiye “would adhere to the Hague Convention of 1912 and the Geneva Conventions of 1925 and 1931 for regulating the manufacture and sale of narcotics.” U.S. Ambassador Charles H. Sherrill had encouraged President Kemal to take action in curtailing the illicit narcotics trade. Source: *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939,* by Roger R. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, pp. 176-177.

1933

Asa Kent Jennings, who unselfishly devoted more than ten years to helping Türkiye modernize and shake off its negative image, died unexpectedly on January 27. On his last day of life, he was still hard at work for Türkiye. Jennings was visiting Washington, DC, for meetings with the Turkish ambassador and the Departments of State and Labor. After arriving in Washington on January 27, he first visited Turkish Ambassador Ahmet Muhtar (Mollaoglu). Following the meeting with the ambassador, Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol hosted Jennings for lunch at his residence. In the afternoon, Jennings went to the Department of Labor on behalf of a Turkish student about extending his stay in the U.S. His next meetings were at the State Department and back to the Turkish Embassy for further discussions. While walking to the State Department, he collapsed on the street near the White House from a severe heart attack and died in a taxi on the way to the hospital.
The novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* by Franz Werfel was published in German. It is about a small community of Armenians in Hatay who resisted deportation by Ottoman troops on Musa Dağı during WWI. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer secured the film rights and started pre-production work in 1934. A rising young movie star, Clark Gable, was to play the hero Gabriel Bagradian. Due to intense lobbying efforts by Turkish Ambassador Munir Ertegün, Louis B. Mayer of MGM scrapped the movie.

- *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* was finally produced in 1982, after MGM sold it movie rights to an Armenian group, as a low-quality and low-budget move that deviated from the source.
- Other producers were interested in making the movie, including Sylvester Stallone (2006) and Mel Gibson (2009), but the projects did not proceed because of Turkish American lobbying efforts.
- The move *The Promise*, released in 2016 and starring Christian Bale, drew material from the novel.


Turkish Airlines established on May 20 by the Ministry of National Defense with a maiden fleet of four aircraft including two Kingbird aircraft purchased from the United States and two small Junkers aircraft from Germany.

Turkish Ambassador Ahmet Muhtar (Mollaoglu)* hosted a 10th anniversary celebration of the Turkish Republic as the first formal event at the new Turkish Embassy, 1606 23rd Street, NW, on Sheridan Circle. According to the *Washington Post*, it was “‘one of the biggest, most dazzling parties ever given in a city quite inured to parties—diplomatic or otherwise.’” *(Washington Post’s April 8, 1934 edition, paying tribute to Ambassador Muhtar’s (Mollaoglu)* tenure in Washington.)* Source: *The Turkish Ambassador’s Residence and The Cultural History of Washington, D.C.* by Skip Moskey, Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, and John Edward Hasse, p. 78. *After Türkiye’s Grand National Assembly adopted the “Surname Law” (“Soyadi Kanunu”) on June 21, 1934, Ambassador Muhtar took the surname of Mollaoglu.

The American Friends of Turkey (AFOT) celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City on October 29. Over 300 people attended. Honored guests at the dinner included:

- Turkish Ambassador Ahmet Muhtar (Mollaoglu)*
- Greek Minister to the United States Charalambos Simpoloulos
- Turkish Consul General and Mrs. H. Basri
- Greek Consul General Panayiotis Paraskevopoulos
- U.S. Department of State’s Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs Wallace Murray
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Chapter 6 | Highlights of Influential People and Stories of Interest

- Chairman of the Foreign Policy Association James G. McDonald
- President of Yale University Dr. James R. Angell
- The New York Times Associate Editor Dr. John H. Finley
- Former U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire and Mrs. Abram I. Elkus
- Former U.S. Ambassador to Türkiye General Charles H. Sherrill
- Former U.S. High Commissioner to Türkiye Rear Admiral Mark L. Bristol
- AFOT Executive Vice-President Asa W. Jennings
- AFOT Vice-President Rayford W. Alley.

At the dinner, Ms. Elkus, spouse of Ambassador Elkus, read a message from President Franklin D. Roosevelt who praised the reforms of President Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)*, and Dr. Finley, The New York Times Associate Editor, read a message from President Kemal who expressed the Turkish people’s “affection and admiration for the United States.” Wallace Murray, Chief of Near Eastern Affairs at State, read a message that President Roosevelt sent to President Kemal (Atatürk)*. Afterward, Murray gave an enthusiastic speech on Türkiye. Source: The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey by Rifat N. Bali, pp. 388-389.

* Turkish citizens didn’t have last names until after Türkiye’s Grand National Assembly adopted the “Surname Law” (“Soyadi Kanunu”) on June 21, 1934. It was at this time when Mustafa Kemal was bestowed with the surname of Atatürk (Father of Turks) by the Grand National Assembly, and Ambassador Ahmet Muhtar took the surname of Mollaoglu.

1934

Ambassador Ahmet Muhtar (Mollaoglu) left his post in Washington on April 20. The Washington Post diplomatic correspondent had written that he "has succeeded in bringing the United States and Turkey closer together than they have been at any time in history." The ambassador was a "consummate diplomat" and had performed his duties without his wife who remained in Türkiye because of ill health. Although he spoke no English, his French was flawless. Source: The Turkish Ambassador’s Residence and The Cultural History of Washington, D.C. by Skip Moskey, Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, and John Edward Hasse, pp. 78-79.

Mehmet Munir (Ertegün)* served as the second ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the United States, from June 18, 1934 until his death on November 1, 1944. Ambassador Ertegün and his sons, Nesuhi and Ahmet, played a significant role in the fight against segregation in the American capital. As Turkish ambassador, he had an open-door policy, inviting African Americans to the embassy and residence. According to his son Ahmet, "I remember that my father occasionally receive letters from outraged Southern senators saying something to the effect of 'It has been brought to my attention, Sir, that a person..."
of colour was seen entering your house by the front door. I have to inform you that, in our country, this is not a practice to be encouraged.' My father would respond with a terse one-sentence reply such as: 'In my home, friends enter by the front door--however, we can arrange for you to enter from the back.'"  

• Interestingly, Ambassador Ertegün, like his predecessor, Ambassador Mollaoglu, did not speak English but was fluent in French.

*After Türkiye’s Grand National Assembly adopted the “Surname Law” (“Soyadi Kanunu”) on June 21, 1934, Mehmet Munir took the surname of Ertegün.

American female archaeologist Hetty Goldman (December 19, 1881 - May 4, 1972), a member of the Goldman-Sachs banking family and one of the first women in her field, started the excavations at the Neolithic site of Gozlukule located in the city of Tarsus of biblical fame in the province of Mersin. The excavations were sponsored by Bryn Mawr, in cooperation with the Archaeological Institute of America, Haverford College, and the Fogg Museum of Harvard University. Dr. Goldman also excavated the ruins of Colophon, the ancient Ionian city near Değirmendere in the province of İzmir, during the Turkish War of Independence when the area was under Greek occupation. 

1935

In March, Senate Majority Leader Joseph F. Robinson of Arkansas commended Atatürk during a Senate speech saying "'under the guidance of President Kemal the Republic of Turkey has taken leadership in the world-wide warfare of humanity against the illicit narcotic-drug traffic.'" Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 177.

Asa Will Jennings, previously an aide to his father Asa Kent Jennings, became the lawyer for the Turkish government in the United States in 1935. In 1940, the younger Jennings obtained American arms to help Türkiye prepare for a possible invasion by Germany, a year before the Lend-Lease Act was passed by the U.S. Congress. After the U.S. entered World II, Asa Will Jennings also persuaded the Turkish government to allow the transit of military supplies for Russia on ships with neutral flags through the Bosphorus because of the American military assistance given to Türkiye earlier. Source: “One Man Changed Greece and Turkey Forever,” by Roger Jennings, American Diplomacy / March 2010. Asa Will Jennings had graduated from Robert College in İstanbul and attended the New York University Law School. Later he served as president of the American Turkish Society in New York. He died on June 17, 1972.
Legendary camel driver Hadji Ali (later Americanized to Hi Jolly), an Ottoman subject of Syrian and Greek parentage recruited in İzmir in the 1850s to join the U.S. Camel Corps, was honored by Arizona Governor Benjamin Moeur with a plaque highlighting his life on the monument marking his grave in Quartzsite, Arizona, near the California border. The National Register of Historic Places added Hi Jolly's Monument to its list in 2011.

- The United States Camel Corps, an idea conceived by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, received its first arrival of camels from the Ottoman Empire and other countries for use as pack animals by the U.S. Army in the southwestern U.S. The U.S. Camel Corps hired Turkish and Arab camel drivers.
- After the U.S. Army abandoned using camels as pack animals at the time of the Civil War, Hadji Ali/Hi Jolly settled in the Southwest. Residents built a pyramid monument over his grave because of his popularity.

A copyright case transpired between the Turkish government and the King Features Syndicate over the unauthorized printing of the comic strips “Mickey Mouse” and “Little Annie Rooney.” Although Türkiye did not honor U.S. copyright regulations, Roger R. Trask pointed out, “The popularity of typically American comic strips such as those involved in the copyright case, though perhaps not the best examples of American literature, was evidence of westernization in Turkey. Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 183.

1938 On May 21, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt described a visit from a Turkish visitor in her syndicated “My Day” column. Ms. Roosevelt wrote “... a young Turkish woman, Miss Ismet Sanli, who is doing newspaper work in this country and who desires to deliver a series of lectures. So far, she has been urged by a few women's clubs to appear in Turkish costume, but refuses, because, as she says, she wants to interpret the new Turkey of today to American women. She has no interest in the Turkey of harem days or the ladies of the early 19th Century in the United States. Miss Sanli was dressed in the latest modern style and gave the impression of a very efficient young business woman. I feel as though the changes in Turkey had come very rapidly, but she insists this change has been coming for a long time. There have always been highly educated women in Turkey, but never before have they been able to use their education and training outside the home. Now, instead of refusing to give women jobs, the men are anxious to put trained women in responsible positions.”

Source: https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1938&_f=md054959
President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s quote about Atatürk’s death (November 10): “My sorrow is that it is no longer possible to fulfill my strong wish to meet this great man.”

1939

Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol (April 17, 1868 – May 13, 1939) died in Washington, DC. Born in Glassboro, New Jersey, Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol was the U.S. High Commissioner in İstanbul after World War I from 1919 until 1927, when the U.S. recognized the Republic of Türkiye. As the U.S. High Commissioner, he founded the American Hospital in 1920, the first non-profit private hospital in Türkiye, and the same year the first nursing school in the country. He worked assiduously in obtaining U.S. recognition of the Republic of Türkiye in the 1920s. Upon leaving his post of U.S. High Commissioner in Türkiye in May 1927, President Calvin Coolidge congratulated him for his contributions to American Turkish relations and congratulated him “on his new position as commander-in-chief of the United States Asiatic Fleet.” Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger M. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 59.

After retirement from the U.S. Navy, he remained involved in U.S.-Türkiye bilateral relations and serving as president of the American Friends of Turkey (AFOT).

With the signing of the treaty on June 23 with France ceding the province of Hatay to Türkiye, the Turkish government allowed for the continuation of the archaeological work undertaken in the province by Princeton University and the Oriental Institute. Source: The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939, by Roger R. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 180.

The Republic of Türkiye on July 15 released a commemorative stamp featuring the founders of the two countries, Kemal Atatürk and George Washington.

Türkiye participated in New York World’s Fair, showcasing Turkish customs, culture, and the history of the Turkish Republic.

Nesuhi Ertegün, Ambassador Ertegün’s oldest child who had been living in Paris where he studied at Sorbonne, moved to Washington due to the advent of World War II. After settling into the embassy residence, he and his younger brother Ahmet challenged Washington’s social taboos of segregation by hosting jam sessions with African American and White musicians in their study on the third floor of the Turkish Embassy on Sheridan Circle. The Ertegüns also hosted their guests for dinners and other meals at the embassy, a rare event in segregated Washington.
According to William P. Gottlieb in his *Washington Post* column were “Washington’s most famous private jam session. . .” Another *Post* reporter Carolyn Bell wrote that the Rumanian legation across the street complained about the noise coming from the Turkish Embassy in early morning hours. Source: The Turkish Ambassador’s Residence and The Cultural History of Washington, D.C. by Skip Moskey, Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, and John Edward Hasse, pp. 96-110. The authors also provided “A partial list of those known to have jammed, one or more times, at the Turkish Ambassador’s Residence comprises many jazz notable, including members of the Louis Armstrong an Count Basie bands, and: Henry “Red” Allen, trumpet / Barney Bigard, clarinet / Lawrence Brown, trombone / Harry Carney, baritone sax / Duke Ellington, piano / Adele Guard, harp / Jay Higginbotham, trombone / Art Hodes, piano / Johnny Hodges, alto sax / Max Kaminsky, trumpet / Huddie Ledbetter, a/k/a Leadbelly, guitar and vocals / John Malachi, piano / Joe Marsala, clarinet /Lou McGarity, trombone / Mezz Mezzrow, clarinet / Benny Morton, trombone / Tommy Myles, drums / Tommy Potter, bass / Zutty Singleton, drums / Rex Stewart, cornet / Teddy Wilson, piano / Lester Young, sax,” page 110.

In December, a severe earthquake struck the province of Erzincan killing thousands of people. The American Red Cross contributed $10,000 to the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay). Source: *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939*, by Roger R. Trask, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1971, p. 184.

### 1940s

**1940**

The American Friends of Turkey (AFOT) hosted a dinner in İstanbul honoring Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Munir Ertegün and the trustees of Robert College and the American College for Girls of İstanbul. Source: *The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey* by Rifat N. Bali, p. 397.

**1941**

Turhan Bey, (born Turhan Gilbert Selahattin Sahultavi) known as “The Turkish Delight” and called a “Turkish Valentino” by gossip columnist Hedda Hopper was one of the earliest actors in Hollywood (1941-1953) with Turkish roots (Turkish and Czech-Jewish origins).

Nesuhi and Ahmet Ertegün organized the first integrated concert in the U.S. capital on April 19. Black and White musicians performed onstage to an
integrated audience. They held the concert at the Edlavitch Jewish Community Center of Washington, DC, 1529 16th Street, NW. Some celebrated performers were Sidney Bechet, Joe Turner, Pete Johnson, and Pee Wee Russell. According to Ahmet, people attending didn’t know it would be an integrated event. The Ertegün brothers had initially booked the National Press Club, 14th and F Streets, NW, for the concert. After Press Club officials learned they were selling tickets to African Americans, they canceled the contract. The brothers then booked the Jewish Community Center, the only place in Washington allowing a mixed crowd, and made history!

1941
President Ismet Inonu was featured on the front cover of Time Magazine (May 19).

1942
Nesuhi and Ahmet Ertegün staged the first integrated concert at the National Press Club, 14th and F Streets, NW, on May 25.

English American actor Cary Grant, one of Hollywood's leading men, and Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton, one of the wealthiest women in the world, were married in California and then spent ten days as guests of Ambassador and Mrs. Munir Ertegün in Washington, DC (July). The Ertegüns loaned their second car and chauffeur to the newlyweds.

1943
Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu was featured on the front cover of Time Magazine (July 12).

1944
Ambassador Mehmet Munir Ertegün became the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Washington, DC, in May, being the longest-serving ambassador to the United States. However, he died from a heart attack on November 1 and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery. In April 1946, President Harry S. Truman had his body taken back to Istanbul aboard the USS Missouri. (The quarterdeck of the USS Missouri was the site of the official Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945, ending World War II. Source: The Turkish Ambassador's Residence and The Cultural History of Washington, D.C. by Skip Moskey, Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, and John Edward Hasse, p. 118

1945
MGM Studios produced a short film, Strange Destiny, on the life of Asa K. Jennings who helped to evacuate 350,000 non-Muslims during the evacuation of İzmir in 1922.

1946
President Harry S. Truman signed the Fulbright Act on August 1 creating the Fulbright Program which set up educational exchange programs between the United States and other countries for teachers, students, professors, and research scholars.
1947 Pan American World Airways (Pan Am), was the first commercial American airline to start flying to İstanbul as part of its first scheduled round-the-world airline flight. Source: Wikipedia: Pan Am.

Ahmet Ertegün, son of the late Turkish Ambassador Munir Ertegün, founded the Atlantic Recording Corporation better known as Atlantic Records in October in New York City with his partner Herb Abramson. He had persuaded his dentist Vahdi Sabit to invest $10,000 for the initial capital. Atlantic Records specialized in jazz, R&B, soul, and later expanded into rock and pop music, and the recording company was instrumental in popularizing Black music in mainstream American society. Some of the famed musicians who worked with Atlantic were Ruth Brown / Ray Charles, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young / Aretha Franklin / Mick Jaggar and The Rolling Stones / Wilson Pickett / Otis Redding / Sam and Dave / Yes / Led Zeppelin. In 1955 Ahmet’s older brother Nesuhi joined the company.

American archaeologist Theresa Bathsheba Goell (July 17, 1901 – December 18, 1985) first visited Nemrut Dağı (Mount Nemrut) in the province of Adiyaman in 1947 when she worked on the excavations at Tarsus. With the hope of finding the tomb of Antiochus I of Commagene, who lived in the first century BC, she started excavations in the early 1950s in collaboration with German archaeologist Friedrich Karl Dörner. In the 1960s, she excavated Samsat, also in Adiyaman Province, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Commagene. Although she never found the tomb, thanks to her extensive work at Nemrut Dağı and Samsat, the modern world learned about the history of ancient Commagene. In 1965, Goell narrated a film about Nemrut Dağı for the National Geographical Society. Source: Wikipedia: Theresa Goell. A documentary film, “Queen of the Mountain,” was produced in 2006, telling Goell’s fascination with Nemrut Dağı and, as a middle-aged woman, left her husband and son to pursue her dream of finding Antiochus’s tomb. Source: Wikipedia: Queen of the Mountain.

1948 Hasan Hüseyin was recognized for 35 years (1913-1948) of exemplary service at the Ford Motor Company by its president Henry Ford II. (For more information on the history of the first Turks in the U.S., see TurkofAmerica Magazine’s 10th issue in 2004.)

Cevat Eyüb Tashman, who in 1911 as an Ottoman student received a scholarship from Columbia University and earned B.S. and E.M. degrees in engineering from there, became head of Türkiye’s petroleum exploration program and discovered Türkiye’s first commercial oil field in Batman in 1948. Cevat Eyüb Tashman is related to Haldun Tashman, who immigrated to the U.S. later in the century and became a successful businessman and prominent philanthropist.

1949

In the academic year of 1949-1950, there were over 700 Turkish students studying in the United States. Source: The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey by Rifat N. Bali, p. 402.

1950s

The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations promoted scientific philanthropy in education, public health nursing, scientific research, and culture, including music in Turkey. Through the Rockefeller Foundation, Turkish artists and musicians such as Ahmet Adnan Saygun, İlhan Mimaroğlu, İlhan Usmanbaş, and Bülent Arel participated in educational trips to the U.S. Sources: Lesar Yurtsever, doctoral researcher at SCRIPTS – Cluster of excellence (Freie Universität Berlin), in his PH. D project highlighting the cultural exchange and musical diplomacy between Türkiye and the U.S. from the 1930s to 1960. Emre Araci’s dissertation, “Life and Works of Ahmet Adnan Saygun“ (1999 University of Edinburgh).


The highest single piece flagpole in Europe (33.5 meters / 109 feet) was installed at the Anıtkabir (Mausoleum of Atatürk) on November 9. The flag post was manufactured in the New York factory owned by Nazmi Cemal, an American citizen of Turkish origin from Macedonia. Nazmi Cemal presented the flag pole to the Turkish government as a gift in 1946. For more information on the history of the first Turks in the U.S., TurkofAmerica Magazine’s 10th issue in 2004.

1951

The first exchange of American and Turkish students and scholars under the Fulbright program began. Between 1951 and 2023, there were 3873 Turkish and 1837 American candidates.
1953

Eartha Kitt, a popular African American singer also of Cherokee descent, internationally popularized *Uskudara Giderken* (a Turkish folk song) with her cabaret version “Usku Dar,” which was her first recorded song. Kitt earlier traveled to İstanbul with the Katherine Dunham Dance Troupe when she first heard the famous song in İstanbul nightclubs. Source: Lesar Yurtsever, doctoral researcher at SCRIPTS – Cluster of excellence (Freie Universität Berlin), in his PH. D project highlighting the cultural exchange and musical diplomacy between Türkiye and the U.S. from the 1930s to 1960.

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in her column, “My Day,” wrote about the short stopover in Istanbul with her secretary, Maureen Corr, flying from New Delhi, India, on route to Athens, Greece. They arrived at 5:00 am on July 6, Monday, and were greeted by U.S. Consul General Macatree at the Yesilkoy Airport. Macatree took them on an early morning tour of the city’s historical sites. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, “We saw the old Byzantine Wall and three of the most beautiful mosques at 6:30 a.m. . . . Of course, we had to be content with just walking around outside. The early morning light made the minarets and the domes even more beautiful and at the Blue Mosque we got a glimpse of the color over a door and that gave us an idea of what it probably is like inside.”

Source: https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydocedits.cfm?_y=1953&_f=md002581a

1954

The American Turkish Society (ATS) hosted a dinner honoring Turkish President Celal Bayer during his official visit to the U.S. on February 1 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. Vice President Richard M. Nixon and former U.S. ambassadors Joseph C. Grew and George McGhee were among the VIPS attending the dinner. Source: *The Saga of a Friendship – Asa Kent Jennings and The American Friends of Turkey* by Rifat N. Bali, p. 402.

1955

The İstanbul Hilton opened on June 10. The opening gala featured Hollywood stars Terry Moore and Olivia de Havilland. It was the first American hotel in Türkiye, the second Hilton in Europe, the first modern hotel built in Europe after World War II. The building was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill in collaboration with award-winning Turkish architect Sedat Hakki. It was built in 21 months and became the tallest building in İstanbul at the time. Hilton Hotels International had signed an agreement with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 9, 1951. The Hilton İstanbul appeared in the 1963 James Bond movie *From Russia with Love* and the 1964 movie *Topkapi*.


- This Hilton, now known as the İstanbul Hilton Bosphorus, is currently the longest operating Hilton Hotel outside the U.S. Today, there are Hilton hotels throughout Türkiye.
The U.S. government, Pan American World Airways (Pan Am), and Turkish State Airlines signed a three-year aviation technical assistance agreement for twenty-four Pan American technicians to train Turkish aviation personnel to operate the state airline with the most modern air and ground techniques. The project was funded by the U.S. government’s foreign technical assistance program in aviation to stimulate economic growth in underdeveloped regions. Source: Pan American World Airways Press Release

1956 U.S. Department of State launched its first “Jazz Ambassadors” tours to Eastern Europe, the Middle East, central and southern Asia, and Africa as part of its cultural diplomacy program to enhance the public image of the United States. Jazz musicians included Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Benny Goodman. Türkiye was included in the Jazz Ambassadors’ itinerary. The tours continued until 1958.

1957 Ahmed Kafadar founded Ordnance Engineering Associates (OEA) in 1957 in Colorado. He was noted for leading the development of the explosive triggers used in ejection seats for jet fighter planes and automobile air bags.


1959 Dave Brubeck’s jazz composition “Blue Rondo à la Turk,” written in 9/8 time common in Turkish music, was featured on his album “Time Out.” Brubeck was inspired to compose “Blue Rondo à la Turk” after visiting Türkiye.

The Rockefeller Foundation, in collaboration with the State Department, funded a trip for the avant-garde musician Henry Cowell and his wife, Sidney, to Türkiye
during their Middle and Far East tour. The trip aimed to report on Turkish music in Istanbul and Ankara, collect folk songs, and deliver lectures about American classical music. Source: Lesar Yurtsever, doctoral researcher at SCRIPTS – Cluster of excellence (Freie Universität Berlin), in his PH. D project highlighting the cultural exchange and musical diplomacy between Türkiye and the U.S. from the 1930s to 1960.

American renowned conductor Leonard Bernstein and the 106-piece New York Philharmonic gave two concerts at Istanbul’s Open-Air Theater in August as part of a European-Middle Eastern tour. “... Bernstein faced an audience of music-hungry Turks that overflowed the bowl’s 5,000 seats, crashed through wooden barriers and stampeded past police lines to jam every aisle and step.” “Lenny gave them two programs to remember; Mozart, Brahms, Beethoven and on to the U.S. moderns, with Aaron Copland's high-stepping Billy the Kid and George Gershwin's swelling, Turkey-fresh Rhapsody in Blue. Both nights he yielded to thunderous ovations, played encores till way past midnight.” (Time Magazine, August 24, 1959)

President Dwight D. Eisenhower became the first U.S. president in office* to visit Türkiye (an informal visit) on December 6 and 7. Arriving in Ankara from Italy with his wife Mamie, Türkiye was the second stop for Eisenhower’s world tour of 12 countries. Eisenhower had visited Türkiye seven years earlier when he met with civil and military officials, March 3-5, 1952, as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) of NATO. The front page of The New York Times on December 7 featured the headline “EISENHOWER HAILED BY BIG CROWDS IN TURKEY AFTER TRIP FROM ROME...”

- The lead story started off with “Hundreds of thousands of dancing, cheering, flag-waving Turks give President Eisenhower an overwhelming welcome yesterday (December 6) that left him “misty-eyed.” The Times story was accompanied by a photo of Eisenhower standing in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s car (a convertible) as it was being driven in downtown Ankara.
- During his visit, President Eisenhower held talks with President Celal Bayer and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes on the world’s problems according to The New York Times article.
- President Eisenhower made the following remarks at the December 6 dinner hosted by Turkish President Celal Bayer in Ankara: “Under the outstanding and farsighted leadership of the founder of Modern Turkey, Kemal Atatürk, you of this country have wrought revolutionary changes. In government, customs, and traditions these changes were breathtaking in scope. They were remarkable for the swiftness of their achievement. They are an inspiration and a guiding light to all newly independent nations, determined on progress, prosperity, and peace. No nation of today encounters greater obstacles to progress than you faced when you made your great national decision. You had
just emerged from the ruin and devastation of the first World War. On every side, you were plagued with problems that seemed beyond solution. But you were rich in your spirit and in the idealism and vitality of your leaders. In them you had a wealth and strength beyond money and machines. You, the people of Turkey forged steadily ahead on the path to industrial development and social progress. You made your country a modern proving ground that democracy and stout hearts are a people's best instruments for the achievement of greatness.” Source: https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/exchange-messages-between-the-president-and-president-bayar-turkey-concerning-the

- When President Eisenhower departed Ankara for Pakistan on December 7, a large banner was placed on the airport terminal with the following wording: “TAKE OUR LOVE BACK HOME, IKE.” Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKeCz_gFl3A

*Note: Former U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant on part of his world tour after leaving the White House in 1877 made a courtesy visit to Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II in Istanbul in March 1878.

1960s

1960  American archaeologist George Fletcher Bass (December 9, 1932 - March 2, 2021), an early practitioner of underwater archaeology, co-directed the excavation of the ancient shipwreck at Cape Gelidonya on Türkiye’s Mediterranean Coast. Bass also founded the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA) at the University of Pennsylvania in 1972 which was later moved to Texas A&M University in 1976. Source: Wikipedia: George Bass (archaeologist). INA also established a research center in Bodrum in 1988 which is also the home to the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology.


Famous American novelist, short-story writer, journalist, and Nobel Prize in Literature laureate Ernest Hemingway died on July 2 by suicide. Born on July 21, 1899, Hemingway, as a young journalist, arrived in Istanbul on September 30, 1922, to cover the last days of the Greco-Turkish War (Turkish War of Independence) and the refugee crisis resulting from the War for the Toronto Star Daily. He first stayed at the Grand Hotel de Londres in Tepebasi and frequented the bar at the Pera Palas Hotel.
In the fall of 1961, the African American writer and activist James Baldwin, noted as one of the most influential American writers of the 20th century, traveled to Türkiye for the first time. Baldwin visited upon the invitation from his friend Turkish actor Engin Cezzar, who had studied at the Yale Drama School and had met Baldwin in New York City in the late 1950s.

- Living in Türkiye off and on for nearly ten years, Baldwin once proclaimed that "Turkey saved my life!" since his stay in Türkiye provided an escape from the racism and homophobia he faced in the United States.
- Baldwin had a group of devoted Turkish friends. In addition to Engin Cezzar and Engin's wife, Gülriz Sururi, his circle included Zeynep Oral, Cevat Capan, Oktay Balamir, and Ali Poyrazoğlu.
- In İstanbul, he hosted American celebrities such as actor Marlon Brando, author Alex Haley, jazz singer Bertice Reading, and trumpeter Don Cherry.
- Baldwin completed two of his well-known novels, *Another Country* and *Tell Me how Long the Train's Been Gone*, in Türkiye, in addition to short stories and essays and his play *Blues for Mister Charlie*.
- He was also active in the Turkish theatre scene, including involvement in Engin Cezzar and Gülriz Sururi's local production of *Hair*.
- As an activist, Baldwin was troubled by the crackdown on Kurdish rights, and he experienced racism and homophobia as well.
- One of Baldwin's favorite hangouts was Avni's Pub in Harbiye-İstanbul, owned by Avni Salbas, an Afro-Turk. In the 1980s, Avni's Pub was also popular with İstanbul's growing expatriate community, including Americans.


1962

President John F. Kennedy’s statement about Atatürk. “I am honoured to join in commemorating the 25th anniversary of the death of Kemal Atatürk. The name of Atatürk brings to mind the historic accomplishments of one of the great man of this century, his inspired leadership of the Turkish People, his perceptive understanding of the modern world and his boldness as a military leader. It is to the credit of Atatürk and the Turkish People that a free Turkey grew out of a collapsing empire and that the new Turkey has proudly proclaimed and maintained its independence ever since. Certainly there is no more successful example of national self reliance then the birth of the Turkish republic and the profound changes initiated since then by Turkey and Atatürk. Atatürk was deeply interested in the friendly relations that have traditionally existed between Turkey and the United States. He noted our democratic governments and once said,
prophetically, ‘We are friends now and we will be much closer friends in the future’. Our present close alliance can be traced to the firm base prepared by Atatürk for free government in an independent Turkey. I am proud that United States can be a partner in this alliance linking us to the country of Atatürk and to the ideals which Atatürk helped establish in Turkey and the World. I salute this great man on the anniversary of his death.”

1963


The Duke Ellington Orchestra participating in the U.S. Department of State’s “Jazz Ambassadors” tour was to have played in Ankara but had to cancel due to the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

1964

The movie *Topkapi*, a comedy and crime thriller about breaking into Topkapı Palace to steal the emerald-encrusted dagger commissioned by Ottoman Sultan Mahmud I in 1746, was the first American movie filmed in Türkiye with scenes shot in İstanbul. It was based on the novel *The Light of Day*. The movie received one Oscar at the 1965 Academy Awards, with Peter Ustinov receiving Best Actor in a Supporting Role. Director: Jules Dassin. Writers: Monja Danischewsky and Eric Ambler. Cast: Melina Mercouri, Peter Ustinov, Maximilian Schell, Robert Morley, and Akim Tarniroff. The main Turkish actors were Senih Orkan, Ege Ernart, Ahmet Danyal Topatan, Faik Çoşkun, Selahattin İçsel, and Bedri Cavuşoğlu.

The legendary Bertha “Betty” Carp who worked for the U.S. government for 50 years, 1914 to 1964, at the U.S. embassies in İstanbul and Ankara and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and was called “The Best Known American in Turkey” received the U.S. State Department’s Superior Honor Award from Secretary of State Dean Rusk at her retirement in 1964. Carp was born in İstanbul on June 15, 1895, to European parents. She began her career at the U.S. Embassy in İstanbul when she was hired by Ambassador Henry Morgenthau in 1914 for administrative duties. From 1942 to 1947, Carp worked for the U.S.’s Office of...
Strategic Services (OSS) and was a close colleague to Allen Dulles who later became Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). She was an invaluable aide to more than a dozen U.S. ambassadors and was a major fundraiser for the American Hospital in Istanbul. She became a naturalized American citizen in 1947. A book about her legend, “The Best Known American in Turkey: Betty Carp,” by Rifat N. Bali, was published in Turkish in 2014.


1965 Five Turkish tailors arrived in Rochester, New York, to work for the Bond Clothing Stores, Inc. (no longer in business) under a unique program of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Commission allowing American clothing manufacturing industries to recruit foreign sewers and tailors for their factories. The program started in 1948 due to the shortage of skilled workers. Initially, recruitment was mainly from Italy, but in subsequent years, skilled sewers and tailors came from Greece, Lebanon, and Türkiye. Over 200 Turkish tailors and their families now reside in Rochester because of this program. Several are now employed by Rochester-based Hickey Freeman Company. Source: ASSIMILATION AND SETTLEMENT PROCESS: THE CASE OF TURKISH TAILOR COMMUNITY IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK by Yenal Kucuker for a graduate class “Ethnic Geography Course,” The State University of New York at Binghamton, May 2008.

1967 Dr. Warren Winkler (April 1, 1928 – February 25, 2019) became the chief physician and general director of the American Hospital in İstanbul. He served as general director until 1990 and as chief physician until 1994. As general director, the American Hospital expanded from seven medical departments to 37, and the number of physicians increased from 42 to 143. Before his appointment to the American Hospital, Winkler, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, had worked at a rural health center in Talas, Kayseri, under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and oversaw a local health project in Mus for the Turkish Ministry of Health as a consultant from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health (Baltimore, Maryland). Winkler was a well-known and engaged member of the American community in İstanbul until his death in 2019. He wrote a book, Iki Doktor Bir Yolculuk (Two Doctors, One Journey), in 2014 about his years in Talas. Source: Vehbi Koç Foundation Encyclopedia: Winkler, Warren H.

1970 You Can’t Win ‘Em All, a U.S. and UK production, was the second American movie filmed in Türkiye with scenes shot in Cappadocia, İstanbul, İzmir and Ephesus. The setting was during the Turkish War of Independence in 1922.
Director: Peter Collinson. Writer: Leo V. Gordon. Cast: Tony Curtis, Charles Bronson, Michele Mercier, and Patrick Magee as Mustafa Kemal Pasha. The main Turkish actors were Fikret Hakan, Gregoire Aslan, Salih Güney, Yüksel Gözen, Henia Halil, and Mümtaz Alpaslan.

In December, the Ertegün brothers (Ahmet and Nesuhi) and Steve Ross of Warner Communications founded the New York Cosmos professional soccer team, which competed in the North American Soccer League (NASL) until 1984. Journalist Gavin Newsham claimed that the Cosmos, in its early years, was “the most glamorous team in world football” due to the signing of famous international stars such as Pelé and Carlos Alberto Torres (Brazil), Giorgio Chinaglia (Italy), and Franz Beckenbauer (West Germany). Cosmos’s initial success also helped to popularize soccer in the United States. Source: Wikipedia: New York Cosmos (1970-1985).

1972

Strolling Through İstanbul – A Guide to the City, a classic for English readers, by Hilary Sumner-Boyd and John Freely, American professors at Bosphorus University was first published by Redhouse Press.

The İstanbul Hilton started İstanbul’s first “Happy Hour” at the hotel’s Pilsen Pub and opened İstanbul’s first discotheque, Cloud 9. Source: https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/isthitw-hilton-İstanbul-bosphorus/hotel-history/

Haldun Tashman, who went to the U.S. as a Fulbright Scholar, joined the Tech Group in Scottsdale, Arizona. Tech Group was a small company specializing in contract manufacturing making molds and plastic parts for the medical industry in the U.S. and other industries globally. He and his partner grew the business with plants in North America, Asia, Europe, and Türkiye. As a successful businessman and entrepreneur, Tashman was active in community affairs in Phoenix, Arizona, as a supporter of nonprofit organizations. After selling his shares in Tech Group in 2005, he devoted his time to philanthropy. He was the inspirational force, founding member, and the first chairman of the Turkish Philanthropy Funds (TPF), established in New York in 2007. He supports through TPF mostly education-related projects in Türkiye and the U.S. In 2008, Tashman received the Ellis Island Honors Society Medal of Honor.

1973

Apollo astronaut James Irwin, the 8th person to walk on the moon during Apollo 15 in 1971, led the first of several expeditions to Mt. Ararat in the 1970s and 1980s in search of Noah's Ark. He reached the peak only once in 1984. Another American public figure, Mark Parris, the U.S. ambassador to Ankara from 1997 to 2000, also reached Mt. Ararat's peak in the early 2000s.
Chapter 8 | Diplomatic Buildings in Ankara, İstanbul, Washington, DC, and New York

Ankara - U.S. Embassy and Ambassador’s Residence

Following the signing of the Mudros Armistice on October 30, 1918, the Ottoman Sultan in İstanbul capitulated to Allied forces. However, the Turkish Nationalist Movement in Anatolia opposed this decision. Turkish Nationalists established a new government in Ankara and inaugurated the Grand National Assembly on April 23, 1920. Mustafa Kemal became its first president.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly abolished the Ottoman sultanate on November 1, 1922. U.S High Commissioner Mark Lambert Bristol reached out to the new regime, using a railroad car at the Ankara train station for the U.S. representative office when traveling to Ankara from İstanbul. The U.S. liaison officer residing in Ankara at this time was Howland Shaw. After the Grand National Assembly declared the Republic of Türkiye on October 29, 1923, the railway car continued to serve as the U.S. office in Ankara until 1924.

The United States did not recognize the newly-formed Republic of Türkiye until 1927. During these early years, the U.S. government leased premises for an Ankara office in a development called the Evkaf Houses in Ulus, near Gençlik Park. The property belonged to the Evkaf, a religious foundation the Turkish government had recently taken over.

In 1927, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries, and the US representative office in Ulus became the U.S. Embassy, which remained in the same location until 1939. However, the first U.S. ambassadors to the Republic of Türkiye continued to reside in İstanbul. John Van Antwerp MacMurray (1936-1941) in 1937 became the first U.S. ambassador to live in Ankara.

The U.S. Embassy relocated to 243 Atatürk Bulvarı in Kavaklıdere in February 1939. In the 1950s, the embassy and the ambassador's residence were moved to Çankaya. The ambassador's residence at Iran Caddesi 59 was occupied in 1952 when George C. McGhee served as ambassador (1952-1953), and Avra M. Warren was the ambassador (1953-1956) during the relocation to the new embassy at 100 Atatürk Bulvarı. The new embassy opened in January 1954 and was designed by the prestigious firm Eggers & Higgins.


During Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone's tenure (2011-2014), the U.S. government bought land, over three and a half hectares (nine acres), in Çankaya for a new embassy facility. It was
the most expensive real estate acquisition by the U.S. government at that time. The U.S. Embassy began its operations at the new facility, 1480 Sokak No. 1, Çukurambar Mahallesi (Çankaya), on August 29, 2022. Jeffrey Lane Flake, a former congressman and U.S. senator, was the ambassador during the move. The complex was designed by Ennead Architects and the general contractor was B.L. Harbert International with a project budget of $514 million.

İstanbul – U.S. Embassy and Consulate General

The history of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire. The United States and the Ottoman Empire established diplomatic relations in 1831 when David Porter (a former naval officer) presented his credentials as U.S. Chargé d'Affaires at İstanbul on September 13. Porter served as head of the American Legation until May 23, 1840. (It is interesting to note that the Ottomans did not send its first minister, Edouard Blak Bey, to Washington, DC, until 1867.)

It wasn’t until the 1880s that the U.S. government obtained a permanent building in Istanbul for the American Legation to the Ottoman Empire, which is still in its possession today. In 1882, the U.S. government obtained the renowned Palazzo Corpi through a lease, an architectural gem in the European quarter of Istanbul’s Tepebasi. Italian architect Giacomo Leon built the palazzo for Genoese merchant Ignazio Corpi. Lew Wallace was the U.S. Minister Resident at Istanbul, serving from September 6, 1881, until September 4, 1882, when his diplomatic status was elevated to U.S. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. He served in that capacity until May 15, 1885. (A note of interest. Wallace was a Union general during the Civil War and author of the bestselling novel “Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ” published in 1880.) The Palazzo Corpi's acquisition occurred during Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s reign and the presidency of Chester A. Arthur.

The American Legation to the Ottoman Empire was finally elevated to embassy status under the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt. John G.A. Leishman, who was serving as the U.S. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Istanbul since March 29, 1901, became the first U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire when he presented his credentials as the Ambassador on October 5, 1906. Thus, the Palazzo Corpi became the U.S. Embassy and residence for the U.S. Ambassador.

In 1907, Ambassador Leishman, a businessman who had worked with steel magnate Andrew Carnegie before becoming a diplomat, believed that the U.S. government should own the Palazzo Corpi as the U.S. Embassy. He purchased the Palazzo Corpi with his funds for 28,000 Ottoman gold liras, about $2.5 million today. After learning that Congress would not reimburse him for the purchase, Leishman, on a visit to Washington, invited the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and key committee members of both the Senate and the House for a night of poker. During the evening, Leishman proposed to his congressional guests that they play for the Palazzo Corpi. The stakes were that the government would reimburse him for the purchase if he won. Leishman won, and the U.S. government reimbursed him for the purchase. Incredibly,
through a poker game, the U.S. government acquired the Palazzo Corpi, the first U.S. government-owned diplomatic building in Europe and the second worldwide.

After the acquisition of the Palazzo Corpi, the U.S. government employed the services of the prolific architect George Oakley Totten, a New York City native who graduated from Columbia University’s School of Architecture in 1892 and afterward studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, to design an annex next to the palazzo as a chancery 1908. (While in Istanbul, Totten also designed the residence of İzzet Holo Pasha, a confidant of Sultan Abud Hamid II who had served as the sultan’s vizier, head of the intelligence agency (Yıldız İstihbarat Teşkilatı), and chief secretary. Totten was also offered a position as the “Private Architect to the Sultan”. In Washington, DC, Totten designed the Everett House, which later became the Turkish Embassy’s Chancery and Ambassador’s Residence.)

During World War I, neither the United States nor the Ottoman Empire declared war against each other. However, in response to pressure from its ally Germany, the Ottomans severed diplomatic relations with the U.S. on April 20, 1917, and the U.S. abandoned the Palazzo Corpi. The Swedish Legation in Istanbul then handled diplomatic affairs for the United States. Abram I. Elkus was the last U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, serving from October 2, 1916, until the break in diplomatic relations. Despite the severance in diplomatic relations, it should be noted that the prestigious American school Robert College and its sister school, the Constantinople (Istanbul) College for Women, and the schools and hospital facilities under the American Board Mission remained in operation in the empire throughout World War I.

After the war, the U.S. government sent Department of State diplomat Lewis Heck as the United States Commissioner to Allied-occupied Istanbul on December 27, 1918. Heck, who had previously served in Istanbul before the severance of diplomatic relations, reopened the Palazzo Corpi as a U.S. representative office. The Palazzo Corpi once again became the residence the senior U.S. official when Rear Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol on January 28, 1919, arrived in Istanbul as U.S. High Commissioner to look after American interests. Bristol became a legend in Türkiye and remained in Istanbul until after diplomatic relations were established between the U.S. and the Republic of Türkiye on February 17, 1927. Replacing Admiral Bristol was Joseph Grew, who served as the first U.S. ambassador from October 12, 1927 to March 13, 1932.

With the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1927, the U.S. Embassy gradually moved from Istanbul to Ankara. The Palazzo Corpi, however, remained the U.S. ambassador’s residence until 1937, when Ambassador John Van Antwerp MacMurray (1936-1941) moved to Ankara—thereby becoming the last U.S. ambassador to reside in Istanbul and the first to live in Ankara. (Note: A villa on the Bosphorus in Yeniköy was leased as a summer residence during this period.)

The Palazzo Corpi became the U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul after the U.S. Ambassador’s residence was relocated to Ankara in 1937. It functioned as the consulate until 2003 when the consulate moved to new quarters in Istanbul’s İstinye district.
The U.S. government still owns the Palazzo Corpi, and since 2014, it has leased the property to Soho House, a global hotel chain which has converted the building into a hotel and private club. The Hollings Center for International Dialogue also has an office on the premises. Note: For more detailed information about the Palazzo Corpi, read Thomas J. Carolan, Jr.’s article on the U.S. Embassy’s (Ankara) website: https://tr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/İstanbul/history/

Turkish Embassy and Ambassador’s Residence- Washington, DC

The Ottoman Empire's official presence in Washington ended on April 20, 1917, after the Ottomans severed diplomatic relations with the United States under pressure from its ally Germany in World War I. Five years after the war, the Ottoman sultanate was replaced with the Republic of Türkiye on October 29, 1923. However, it wasn't until February 17, 1927, that the United States and the new government in Türkiye established diplomatic relations.

Ahmet Muhtar Mollaoğlu was the first ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the United States, serving in this role from November 28, 1927, until April 20, 1934. One of his first tasks in carrying out President Mustafa Kemal’s instructions was to find a prestigious site for the Turkish embassy. President Mustafa Kemal predicted that the United States would become the world leader after the next world conflict and wanted the embassy in Washington to represent the Republic of Türkiye as a modern nation state and to cultivate American public opinion.

Before securing a permanent site, Ambassador Mollaoğlu first leased a wing of the Wardman Park Hotel on Connecticut Ave, NW, in Washington's Woodley Park neighborhood (now a Marriott Hotel) for the embassy's operations. Later, he leased a townhouse at 1708 Massachusetts Ave, NW, now the Embassy of Trinidad & Tobago. While the Turkish embassy was at 1708 Massachusetts, Ambassador Mollaoğlu also leased the country estate Airlie overlooking Rock Creek at 27th Street, NW, and Military Road for social functions and as a summer residence. (Airlie was razed in 1957 for constructing the Saint John's College High School campus.)

For the permanent embassy site, there were two main areas in Washington for diplomatic missions that Ambassador Mollaoğlu considered—the traditional 16th Street, NW, corridor north of the White House and once known as the Avenue of Presidents, and the Sheridan Circle and Massachusetts Avenue, NW, vicinity which was becoming a popular location for the diplomatic corps.

In 1931, Ambassador Mollaoğlu considered leasing the Shahan Mansion at 1633 16th St, NW, on the corner of R Street but later decided to lease the Beaux-Arts Everett House on Sheridan Circle in Washington's upscale Kalorama neighborhood. Thus, the Everett House became the embassy's chancery and residence in late fall 1932.
The exquisite Everett House, also known as "The Little White House," was built by Edward Hamlin Everett, known as the "Bottle King", the owner of the American Bottle Company. Construction of the stately home took over five years and was completed in late 1916. The mansion's architect was the highly respected George Oakley Totten, Jr, who had designed the chancery for the U.S. embassy in Istanbul in 1908 and the residence for the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II's confidant İzzet Holo Pasha. (Totten was also offered a position as the "Private Architect to the Sultan.") In April 1936, under its second ambassador to the United States, Mehmet Munir Ertegun (June 18, 1934 to November 1, 1944), the Turkish government purchased the Everett House and all its furnishings for less than a million dollars.

Ambassador Ertegun and his sons, Nesuhi and Ahmet, played a significant role in the fight against segregation in the American capital. As Turkish ambassador, he had an open-door policy, inviting African Americans to the embassy and residence. His sons, Nesuhi and Ahmet, would also have jazz jam sessions with African American musicians. Thus, outside the White House, the Turkish embassy was one of the few institutions in segregated Washington where Whites and Blacks could socialize in the 1930s and 1940s.

It wasn't until 1989 that the Turkish government moved the chancery from the ambassador's residence to a four-story building at 1714 Massachusetts, NW. The chancery remained there for more than ten years. Construction for a new chancery was started in July 1997 at the site of the former Economic-Commercial Building, 2525 Massachusetts Ave, NW, which was owned by the Turkish government and demolished for the construction of the new chancery.

The opening ceremony of the new embassy building was held on Friday, April 23, 1999, which coincided with the 79th anniversary of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye and with the participation of President Süleyman Demirel during his visit to Washington on the occasion of the annual NATO summit. However, the chancery's move from 1714 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, to 2525 Massachusetts was not completed until June 1999. The impressive new chancery was designed by Shalom Baranes Associates, ensuring it had a Turkish vernacular style.

The next major project for the Turkish government was the three-year restoration of the ambassador's residence (Everett House) on Sheridan Circle, completed in 2007 at $20 million. A distinguished team of specialists undertook the restoration, and in 2007, it received a District of Columbia Award for Excellence for Historic Preservation.

For more information about the Everett House: The Turkish Ambassador's Residence and the Cultural History of Washington, D.C. by Skip Moskey, Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, and John Edward Hasse.
Turkish Consulate General - New York

The Turkish Consulate General in New York was the first consular representation of the Republic of Türkiye in the United States, starting operations in 1925 before the United States and Türkiye established diplomatic relations in 1927. Celal Münif Bey was the first consul general from January 1, 1925, to July 9, 1927.

In 1977, the Turkish government purchased the building on 821 First Avenue in New York City at $3 million for its UN Mission and Consulate General, which became known as the Türk Evi (Turkish House). Sabri Çağlayangil was the foreign minister at the time. After razing the old premises, construction started in September 2017 for a new Türk Evi with 35 stories costing $300 million. Mevlut Çavuşoğlu was the foreign minister during the construction period. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening on September 20, 2021.

The new Türk Evi houses the offices of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Türkiye to the United Nations and the Consulate General of New York. It also provides space for the Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) office, meeting rooms, a library, an auditorium, a prayer room, residences for staff, and underground parking.
G. Lincoln McCurdy Bio Summary

G. Lincoln McCurdy is an international affairs professional with over 40 years of leadership and management experience in the U.S. government, private sector, NGOs, and community service.

Currently, he serves as a consultant on U.S.-Türkiye relations and grassroots organizing. He advises five Turkish American political action committees (PACs) under the Ten Thousand Turks Campaign and previously served as an officer for the Turkish Coalition USA PAC. Until recently, he was the president of the Turkish Coalition of America (TCA), an independent not-for-profit organization in Washington, DC. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Turkish Philanthropy Funds. Prior to TCA, Mr. McCurdy was the president of the American-Turkish Council in Washington, DC. Earlier in his career, he worked at the U.S. Department of Commerce, served as the Consul for Commercial Affairs at the U.S. Consulate General in İstanbul, and was a consultant for the Bank of Boston in Türkiye.

He has received several awards and honors throughout his career. In 2018, Mr. McCurdy was one of the laureates of the Gusi International Peace Prize in Manila, Philippines, Asia’s foremost award for the attainment of peace and respect for human life. In 2023, he was honored at the 10th Turkish World Business Council (DTIK) Congress in İstanbul with a Friend of Türkiye Award presented by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Previously, the U.S. Department of State and the İstanbul Chamber of Commerce recognized Mr. McCurdy for his contributions to enhancing commercial relations between the United States and Türkiye, and he received the Turk of America Outstanding Achievement Award in Leadership & Management.

He graduated from Hanover College in Indiana and holds an M.A. in International Management from George Washington University. He and his wife have two daughters and two grandchildren.