

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY TURGUT ÖZAL PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Veterans,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we are assembled here to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign and to salute the sacrifice of the gallant soldiers who have fallen in pursuit of their ideals in this beautiful corner of our country.

Seventy five years ago on the morning of April 25, 1915 a combination of allied troops landed on the beaches of Gallipoli.

Regardless of its objective and outcome, the campaign itself was a hard and fierce struggle, but one that was free of dishonourable conduct. All the adversaries proved gallant and determined, earning the respect of each other. For, on this battlefield, soldiers engaged in fierce combat had sent water to their foes whose own water supply had been exhausted, others would leave behind hot cooked food when forced out of their trenches and here, medics gave comfort to the wounded of both sides.

This is why the lesson of the Gallipoli campaign will remain unique forever. The friendship that was built among our nations has stood the passage of time. This is the true story of peace. There is no room in our shrinking world for ill feelings and hate and the Gallipoli Campaign is the best example that nations, if they really desire, are capable of building friendly relations even on foundations of past wars. Therefore, this anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign is not just a time to pay tribute to our dead and to remember the past. It is also a time to look forward and reflect on the virtues of maintaining peace.

On the other hand, the Gallipoli Campaign also deserves to be remembered and carefully studied as it has determined the future of many nations and yielded political results of great magnitude that has changed our world.

Primarily, the Campaign, hindering the flow of Allied support, paved the way for the fall of the Tzarist Russia. Consequently, in less than two and a half years, the first ever communist regime in history was established in Russia. The world-wide effects of this development has reached our day.

The peoples of the countries like Australia and New Zealand have for the first time reached a real sense of national identity at the conclusion of this Campaign.

Finally, the campaign had important and lasting effects also on the Turkish people.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, The founder of the Republic of Turkey first acclaimed nation wide recognition in this Campaign and became a General. We can say that one of the greatest leaders of the 20 th century was born here.

This year is a special one for all of us here. We have come together to consolidate our friendship, to immortalize our dead who have fallen on this land and to remember and better appreciate the respective qualities of all those who were involved in the campaign.

This indeed is a special anniversary, for we have among us a handful of the original landing and defending parties still alive and determined to travel to the spot, to embrace each other with affection and respect in the presence of high level official delegations from their respective countries.

Perhaps ten years hence, no one would remain to come back again to Gallipoli, but they would adorn for ever one of the brighter pages of history. Their bravery and gallantry will remain as exceptional examples for the admired virtues of our race.

On the 75 th anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign we recall in reverence and with gratitude, the memories of those who have given their lives in the service of their respective countries and we solemnly declare that we shall cherish, treasure and pass on this valuable asset and common heritage of ours intact to the generations to come.

I have no doubt that the deep feelings we all share today are best reflected in the following words of Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic.

" To heroes who have shed their blood on the soil of this country:

" You rest here in the land of a friendly nation. Sleep in peace and tranquility. You lie together side by side with Turkish soldiers in each other's embrace.

" To mothers who have sent their sons to war from distant lands:

" Shed no more tears. Your sons are now in our hearts. Calm and serene, they will sleep in repose and tranquility. In losing their lives on our soil, they have become our sons as well."