

Turkish President: President Trump's Election has Led to the Awakening of a New Set of Hopes in Our Region

Tuesday afternoon, President Donald Trump hosted his Turkish counterpart, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, at the White House for high-level discussions.

Prior to those meetings, the two NATO leaders met with members of the media in the Roosevelt Room and made some brief statements. President Trump went first, stating:

It is a pleasure to welcome President Erdogan for his first visit to the White House in years. The American and Turkish peoples have been friends and allies for many, many decades.

Turkey was a pillar in the Cold War against communism. It was a bastion against Soviet expansion. And Turkish courage in war is legendary. That is so true.

Turkish soldiers fought bravely alongside of American soldiers in the Korean War, and we haven't forgotten what they did. In some ways, when we looked at their great bravery in the fight of Korea – and in Korea, it was just something that our soldiers and our great generals still remember. Supreme Commander General Douglas MacArthur singled out and praised the exemplary valor of the Turkish soldier – said, some of the great soldiers of the world.

Today we face a new enemy in the fight against terrorism, and again we seek to face this threat together. The Turkish people have faced horrible terrorist attacks in recent years and even recently. We offer our compassion to the victims, and we offer our support to the Turkish nation.

We support Turkey in the first fight against terror and terror groups like ISIS and the PKK, and ensure they have no safe quarter, the terror groups. We also appreciate Turkey's leadership in seeking an end to the horrific killing in Syria. The Syrian civil war shocks the conscience of the whole world. And all you have to do is look in the front page of the papers today and you'll see exactly what we're talking about. We also support any effort that can be used to reduce the violence in Syria and create the conditions for a peaceful resolution.

President Erdogan and I are also discussing the need to reinvigorate our trade and commercial ties. These are areas where we can build our relationship that will benefit both of our countries. Military equipment was ordered by Turkey and the President, and we've made sure that it gets there quickly.

I look forward to working together with President Erdogan on achieving peace and security in the Middle East, on confronting the shared threats, and on working toward a future of dignity and safety for all of our people.

Mr. President, thank you for visiting our country and joining us today at the White House. It is a great honor to have you with us. Thank you.

Erdogan, using an interpreter, made the following remarks in response:

Mr. President, my dear friend, distinguished members of the press, at the outset I'd like to wholeheartedly salute you all. And I would like to take all this opportunity to thank President Trump and his team for the generous hospitality they have shown us upon arrival, not only to my personal self but to the entire members of my delegation. On behalf of the entire Turkish nation, thank you, Mr. President.

And once again, in your presence, I would like to

congratulate President Trump for the legendary triumph that he has garnered in the aftermath of the elections.

Quite recently, we've had bilateral discussions with President Trump, and we've had the opportunity to focus on the outstanding relations between Turkey and the United States that date back a long time in history, which are very well rooted and which have quite happily reached a level of strategic partnership.

The relations between Turkey and the United States have been erected upon common democratic values and common interests. Keeping our outstanding relations stronger than ever will be very important not only for our common interests, but also stability of the globe and peace around the world.

The close cooperation that both of the countries shall demonstrate, especially in the region, which is currently in turmoil, will be very important for the rest of the world. And, primarily, we are alongside by each other as Turkey and the United States, under the roof of the United Nations, NATO and the G20.

We have been enjoying a close cooperation in all of these platforms, in all of these fora around the world. And in the future to come, we are going to focus on making sure that we're going to expand our close cooperation and build on the outstanding dialogue that we enjoy.

We are determined to expand our relations, and I believe my current official visit to the United States will mark a historical turn of tide. Whether it be throughout our bilateral discussions, whether it be the discussions that we shall have between the delegations, I think we are going to enjoy some further gains in terms of the future of our relations. We seem to agree on expanding our relations in the field of economy, trade, reciprocal investments, energy and defense industry.

It is going to be very important for us to forge a close solidarity and cooperation in the field of fighting terrorism, primarily with Daesh and all the other terrorist organizations in the region. And we are committed to fighting all forms of terrorism, without any discrimination whatsoever, that impose a clear and a present threat upon our future.

There is no place for the terrorist organizations in the future of our region. Taking YPG and PYD in the region – taking them into consideration in the region, it will never be accepted, and it is going to be against a global agreement that we have reached. And we should never allow those groups to manipulate the religious structure and the ethnic structure of the region, making terrorism as a pretext or an excuse.

Those who are willing to turn to chaos in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya are bound to lose eventually. They will never be able to turn that chaos in that part of the world into an opportunity, and the terrorist organizations with blood on their hands are bound to fail.

And as I have previously done so, I have been frankly communicating our expectations with regard to the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization, which we have notified our friends of their involvement in the failed coup of July the 15th in Turkey. And we have taken into consideration the joint steps that we can take forward in Syria and Iraq.

Of course, President Trump's recent election victory has led to the awakening of a new set of aspirations and expectations and hopes in our region. And we know that, by the help of the new U.S. administration, these hopes will not be lost in vain. And we find that it was the most necessary answer to be given to the Syrian regime, especially in the aftermath of the recent chemical attacks that took place. And we know that, in terms of keeping up

with the principled and committed fight against the terrorists organizations all around the world, we will not repeat the mistakes of the past, and we will continue down this path together.

In the restoration and the establishment of stability and security of the region in question, the alliance and this partnership and cooperation between the United States and Turkey is of vital importance. I hope and pray that both of us will be committed to expanding further our cooperation in the future along with consulting each other more frequently. We are laying the foundation of a new era between the two countries in terms of our relations. I hope and pray that this new administration will bring forth auspicious results for the relations.

And I would like to thank President Trump for his very kind and cordial invitation, and I'm looking forward to hosting him in Turkey along with his entire family.

Members of the media attempted to turn the event into a press interrogation about earlier reports that President Trump allegedly shared highly classified information with the Russian foreign minister and ambassador during meetings at the White House last week. He brushed them aside for the most part, saying he a "very, very successful" meeting with the Russians and that the fight is with ISIS.

You can watch the entire briefing in the video clip above.