NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 17.

Remarks on Receiving the Order of the State of the Turkish Republic Award in Ankara

November 15, 1999

First of all, let me thank you for this beautiful Order of State award. You know, in my country, they give you these awards normally when you're one step away from death. [*Laughter*] It's quite a wonderful thing to receive one when at least you still feel quite normal. [*Laughter*] And particularly, an award that symbolizes our shared values and the long friendship between our two countries, one that goes back in many ways to the beginning of our country and, clearly, for the last 50 years, back to the beginning of the Truman Doctrine and the commitment of the United States to the security and integrity of Turkey.

In these last 50 years, we have been partners from Korea to Kosovo, against aggression and oppression, and as we look ahead to the future, we will have many opportunities for richer and deeper partnerships.

I would just briefly observe that it is an irony of history that we are on the edge of a new millennium—which will be shaped by unbelievable advances in technology, an explosion in information, and great leaps forward in science—but the biggest problem the world has is that everywhere people are too much in the grip of the oldest difficulty of human societies: We still are prone to fear people who are different than ourselves.

And so, all across the world, we see ethnic, racial, religious conflicts. We see people remembering old reasons for geopolitical difficulties, when new opportunities for cooperation are staring them right in the face. And it is for those of us who are moving into this new millennium to leave our children a more unified vision of human society and of human cooperation across national lines, one that gives all children, without regard to their station or birth, a chance to live up to their dreams—boys and girls alike; Muslims, Jews, Christians alike; people who come from any part of the world.

I hope that we can be faithful, Turkey and the United States, to the ideals and dreams of our founders and, together, leave that legacy of a unifying vision of human life.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:50 p.m. in the Reception Hall at the Presidential Palace. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Demirel in Ankara

November 15, 1999

President and Mrs. Demirel, Prime Minister and Mrs. Ecevit, to the government coalition partners, the other parliamentary leaders, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Turkish and American friends.

Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for the wonderful reception. I am delighted to see so many friends of our two countries at a moment of great optimism for our relationship, tempered by great sadness over the tragedy of the earthquakes you have suffered.

President Eisenhower visited Turkey for a day in 1959. President Bush came for 2 days in 1991. I am proud to be spending 5 days here. Every visit seems to be twice as long as the last one. [*Laughter*] The good news is, our partnership is becoming more important every year. The bad news is that if American Presidents keep this up, some day one of us will not be welcome here. [*Laughter*]

Our relations go back to the beginning of the United States. Not long after our country was created, a high official, the Grand Senor, at what was then Constantinople, saw a ship flying the American flag sail into the harbor. Because the flag with stars on it was considered to be a lucky sign, he predicted then that the people of Turkey and the United States would enjoy a long friendship. Now, his prophecy has come to pass.

Our friendship deepened more than 50 years ago, when another ship sailed into the Bosphorus. I'm told that every citizen of your country then alive remembers the day the

United States ship *Missouri* arrived to protect the peace in the uncertain days following World War II. That sent a message that America will always be there when our Turkish friends need us.

Since then, it's been equally true that each time our common interests have been imperiled, the Turkish people have been there alongside America. This fall another American vessel came to Turkey, under tragic circumstances, when the *Kearsarge* arrived to assist the victims of the earthquake. Now Turkey again has suffered natural disaster. And again I send the same simple message: Please, let us know what we can do to help, and we will be there.

How we use our friendship will do much to define the century we are about to begin. What we do together will help to determine whether peace takes hold in the Middle East, whether tolerance takes root in the Balkans, whether young democracies succeed in the Caucasus. The way we do business together will help to determine whether our people have the jobs and reliable sources of energy necessary well into the new century. What we have stood for together, most recently in Kosovo, will help to decide whether the coming century is marked by democracy rooted in our common humanity or by tyranny feeding off hatred.

I must take a moment tonight to express my appreciation for the contributions to the United States of our citizens of Turkish descent. Just last week a remarkable Turkish-American, named Kenan Sahin, gave $100 million to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology out of gratitude for the education he received there. Ahmet Ertegun was the son of a Turkish Ambassador to the United States who grew up in Washington. But instead of attending diplomatic events like this one, he spent most of his time going out to hear rhythm and blues musicians. When he founded Atlantic Records, he fundamentally changed the history of modern American music in ways that have greatly enriched every single citizen of our country and hundreds of millions of people throughout the world.

When we finished shaking hands with all of you tonight, the President said, "Well, I know that was a long line, but I wanted you to see the face of modern Turkey." Well, I have had the opportunity to see the face of modern Turkey, and I am confident that when it comes to our relationship and our common endeavors, the best is yet to come.

Mr. President, we are grateful for your leadership and all you have done in your distinguished career. Fifty years ago you came to the United States to study and work among us. When we celebrated our Bicentennial in 1976, you wrote a moving essay describing how your first visit persuaded you of the importance of, and I use your words, "providing full opportunities to all citizens, regardless of birth, origin, and creed."

Mr. President, though your engineering days are over, I am proud of the bridges you have helped us to build together. I ask all of you to join Hillary, me, and our American delegation in a toast to the President and Mrs. Demirel, Prime Minister and Mrs. Ecevit, and the people of Turkey.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:05 p.m. in the Main Dining Room at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Demirel's wife, Nazmiye; Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey and his wife, Rahsan; and Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Yildirim Akbulut.

Remarks to Earthquake Survivors in Izmit, Turkey

November 16, 1999

Thank you for making us feel so welcome. I want to especially thank the Governor, the mayor, the Deputy Governors who went on tour. I want to thank the Yoldas family and the other families who took us into their tents and gave us a feeling for what your lives are like here. I want to thank the teachers and the students who took us into the schools. I want to thank the children who sang us songs and gave us their posters and gave us their little work of clay. I want to thank all of you who have worked hard to clear away the remaining damage done by the earthquake and to begin the process of rebuilding.

I know this is a time of great uncertainty for you, especially since another earthquake just hit not too far from here. I want you to know that most of the tents that you are staying in here came from the United States;