

**ADDRESS BY H.E. ABDULLAH GÜL,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY,
AT THE 4TH WORLD POLICY CONFERENCE**

President Fischer,
President Türk,
Mr. Montbrial,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to be among you today in this magnificent setting. I still cherish the fond memories of my official visit to Vienna last May, as the guest of President Fischer. Each time I visit Vienna; I cannot help, but be impressed by the splendor and the beauty of this historical city.

We are gathered here mainly to discuss the new challenges and opportunities ahead of us. We may still not agree on what to call the last 20 years, but, I believe that we are witnessing the early days of a new world order.

In that sense, this location has an inspiring significance. Almost two hundred years ago, in 1815 at the end of the Napoleonic wars, leading powers gathered in Vienna to discuss how to establish a new European order. As we all know, eventually a new balance of international system emerged and a rather long period of relative stability followed suit.

So many things have changed since then, but, one big question remains the same.

I am referring to the dilemma of finding a balance between freedom and security. The makers of the new order of that time opted for laying grounds for a stable system at the expense of freedoms.

Nevertheless, the system proved to be incapable of holding back the will of the people and eventually fell apart.

In those days, the balance of the international system was being discussed primarily on the basis of territory.

Today, the sweeping impact of globalization is causing a paradigmatic shift in our understanding of the world at large. Unquestionably, globalization is much more than a mere economic state of affairs.

In the political sense too, territories are no longer a sacred shield of national sovereignty. Even, the most consolidated democracies are not immune to the process of global exposure and accountability.

Furthermore, the tectonic shifts in the global political and economic system render global governance structures anachronistic.

With new players, rising powers and shifting balances, old rules are breaking down or becoming irrelevant.

This is why there is pressing need to re-evaluate the functioning of the global system.

At a Chatham House conference last year, I argued that the current international system was at the state of a three dimensional “imperfect equilibrium” in the political, economic and socio-democratic domains.

Since then, along with the ecological deficit, all the said discrepancies have drastically hit the international system.

To give a couple of examples; we had the Arab Spring; sovereign debt crisis in Europe; alarming tension between Iran and some other countries; renewed terrorist attacks in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan; a tragic famine in Somalia; and finally, the nuclear contamination in Japan.

All these factors have the potential to push the international system from a state of “imperfect equilibrium” into a “perfect imbalance”. Therefore, we have to be extremely vigilant on the global governance of these issues.

Let me start elaborating my views about the deficits in the international political order.

Most of current international political-security structures were shaped in the time of Cold War. These structures are under increased pressure to transform themselves in accordance with the changing global dynamics.

It is also an agreed fact that no single power can cope with these challenges alone.

There is a need for truly effective multilateralism with the participation of the emerging powers.

In this respect, the United Nations, as the flagship of the international system and global governance, certainly needs a comprehensive reform. In this regard, the reform of the UN Security Council is imperative.

Unfortunately, the United Nations has so far failed to adapt itself to the changing realities of our time.

I have to say that the most common perception of the UN today, is that of an international structure which serves the interests of the leading powers.

Having placed the focus on the UN as such, however, we should not ignore the relevance, efficiency, accountability and legitimacy of the other international institutions too.

Distinguished Participants,

The second deficit I would like to talk about is in the global economic sphere.

Four years after the outbreak of the global financial crisis, the world economy has entered into a dangerous phase once again.

Factors such as the sovereign debt crisis in Europe and weak economic data of the US have caused concerns over another global recession.

It is becoming clearer that the impact of the current crisis would remain longer than previously thought.

Many European countries are struggling with enormous debt levels and budget deficits above the Maastricht Criteria.

I believe that the European Union's negligence to the implementation of its own economic criteria paved the way to the current difficult situation.

Moreover, the lack of political will and ineptness to take courageous actions in dealing with these problems further aggravated the situation in the euro zone countries.

Those failed economies may bring down the whole EU with them. In fact, the very unity of the Union is at stake because of the split between the euro zone members and the other EU members.

Ongoing economic problems in Europe threaten the global economy as a whole, since the level of economic interdependence among the continents is very high, in terms of foreign trade, international finance and investments.

Consequently, the perception of a looming global crisis has adversely affected the prospects of the consumers, producers and investors all across the world.

In my opinion, the world economy is in a state of a “balance of economic terror” that may turn into a full-fledged global depression.

Therefore, unless and until we bring the global economic system to a new and sustainable equilibrium, we might have to live with symmetrical economic shocks at both global and regional levels.

To this end, the new global economic order must redress these imbalances and create a new framework where developed and developing economies can deal with these challenges in a true spirit of partnership.

There is no doubt that with its balanced membership of both advanced and emerging economies, the G-20 may play a leading role in governing the world economy.

Distinguished Guests,

If we want a sustainable international system, we must also think about devising new cooperation schemes to lift billions of people out of poverty.

We should remind ourselves that development and security are directly linked and mutually reinforcing.

No one can sleep safely in this world as long as we have more than a billion people living less than a Dollar a day.

As Turkey, we consider such an engagement with the least developed countries a priority.

In this regard, last May we hosted the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC).

We have then intensified our efforts to address development problems of the LDC's as stipulated by the Istanbul Action Plan.

In line with this commitment and with the contribution of Turkish NGOs, our overall development assistance has now reached around two billion Dollars annually.

Coming back to my earlier point, there is no doubt that; the best remedy to the elimination of poverty is to provide a functioning system of international free trade.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is certainly going through a historic transition. The way we are going to deal with the unfolding events of today, will make a vital impact on the lives of many generations to come.

From Africa to Asia, Europe to the Middle East, the order of the past is changing. Of course, the most important change of the new strategic climate is the Arab awakening.

For me, the Arab awakening was a process long overdue, and is irreversible now. It is simply the normalization of history in this part of the world.

After all, the Southern Mediterranean is a region that has been the cradle of many civilizations.

In that sense, who can deny the importance of the Great Library of Alexandria, which was the single greatest archive of knowledge of the ancient world?

It should also be noted that the region was home to many great philosophers like Farabi and Ibn Khaldun. Their influence in sociology, political science, and education has been felt over generations.

Therefore, one can argue that there has always been the necessary historical and intellectual accumulation in the region for the ideal of a pluralistic democracy.

What is happening now, on the basis of genuine homegrown dynamics, represents a correction of history and the course of human civilization.

Nevertheless, it is still too early to make a safe prediction as to what will happen in each country engulfed by the winds of change.

There will be some setbacks along the way. Each country will find its own balance based on its specific conditions.

However, we believe that we now have a golden opportunity to end the decades-long misery of the region. We hope that the people's genuine aspirations for a life in dignity will be materialized.

We cannot overlook the daunting economic and social requirements of hardship lying ahead.

When the revolutionary fervor ends, the new leaders will find themselves faced with the enormous challenge of creating economic opportunities for everyone.

We, as the international community, should decisively assist the new democracies of the region. Thereby, we can create a virtuous cycle in which economic growth and democratic consolidation are reinforcing each other.

Turkish experience proves that traditional and spiritual values can be in perfect harmony with the contemporary standards of life and modernity.

It is no surprise that the emerging democracies in the MENA region are examining Turkish democratic experience and the institutional set-up. Turkey is a source of inspiration for them.

Particularly our approach to religious freedom and secularism, and the way we have turned those notions into an ultimate assurance of democratic pluralism and harmony between the state and the society is highly relevant.

It sets an example for those countries in the region struggling to find the right balance between faith and politics.

Distinguished Participants,

The growing pessimism due to economic crisis in today's Europe is reshaping its political life. There are growing manifestations of intolerance and discrimination in most European countries.

There is a rise in electoral support for political parties which portray immigration as the main cause of insecurity, unemployment, crime, poverty and social problems.

As a result, we are extremely concerned about the rise of xenophobic and Islamophobic tendencies. The horrific terror act committed in Norway last July, was a chilling reminder that the threat of far right extremism should not be underestimated.

Unfortunately, there are dramatic signs of complacency, especially when the European collective conscious fails to accept the terror coming from its core.

We all know that terror in itself is an insane act. Nevertheless, if we do not punish the perpetrators on the grounds of their so-called insanity, fighting terrorism will become an impossible job.

Most recently we were shocked once again, this time by the news of the cruel murders committed by the neo-Nazis in Germany, between 2000 and 2006. We were particularly saddened by the fact that 8 out of the 10 victims were of Turkish origin.

There is a real sense of concern among the immigrant communities not only in Germany but across the entire Europe.

In this regard, I commend President Wulff for his efforts to unearth the truth surrounding those attacks and to heal the wounds of the families of the victims.

I hope President Wulff's political stand vis a vis the threats posed by the extreme right movements will set an example for all mainstream political figures and parties in Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should admit that so far I have depicted a rather gloomy picture of the world affairs. Of course, we have ample reasons to be worried.

However, there is no room for pessimism. Last week, I visited Kyrgyzstan to attend the Presidential handover ceremony in Bishkek.

Although unnoticed, this successful and peaceful democratic transition, realized in only 18 months at the heart of Asia, is commendable.

Therefore, I believe, Kyrgyzstan deserves a helping hand from those who promote democratic transition around the world.

The ongoing economic crisis should not overshadow the strategic imperative for supporting democracy, peace and stability in the world.

History is full of lessons proving the costs of inaction.

As Mark Twain said, "*History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme*".

I believe that the decisions and actions we take now will be instrumental in defining the outcome of the changing global dynamics.

I hope the ideas coming out of this important conference will make a humble contribution to such a positive outcome.

Thank you.