



The United States and Turkey: Innovating together

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Op-Ed

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I was delighted to visit Istanbul and Ankara to co-chair the third meeting of the United States-Turkey Economic Partnership Commission with Turkey's distinguished Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ertugrul Apakan. In light of our meetings, we agreed on a [Plan of Action](#), which, as Turkey enters its fifth year of strong, private sector-led economic growth, will help businesspeople in both our countries to capitalize on the new opportunities created by sound economic policies and reforms. This Plan will focus our work in four areas: :

Trade, Investment, and an Innovative Society

Success in today's global economy requires innovation and investment in the future. We will conclude a new Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement and pursue policies that give entrepreneurs the security they need to invest, take risks and innovate. We will sponsor scientific and academic exchanges, and we supported a conference on June 7 in Istanbul by the American Business Forum in Turkey called "*Building Value: Creating an Environment for Innovation and Change.*".

Regional Leadership and Cooperation

Turkey's sophisticated corporations and world-class business leaders have great potential to contribute to economic development beyond Turkey's borders. We agreed to explore the idea of joint production opportunities through U.S.-Turkish business cooperation in third countries in the region. U.S. support for the work of Turkey's Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) to develop "*Industry for Peace*" in Gaza is an example of how our private sectors can work together in other places.:

Energy Cooperation and Efficiency

The Action Plan identifies the energy sector as one of the most promising areas for working together. We will work to create conditions that will encourage investments by U.S. companies to help Turkey meet its growing energy demand at the lowest possible cost, in the most efficient manner, and in an environmentally-friendly way. The success of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline paves the way for working together to bring new supplies of natural gas to Turkish and European consumers from the Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East, and this will be a key focus of our work.

Building Ties Between U.S. and Turkish Business:

Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbones of both our economies. TOBB and the United States Chamber of Commerce are already working together, including producing a new handbook on doing business in the United States that was launched during the Economic Partnership Commission meetings. Our governments will support other contacts that will help our business sectors get to know each other better. It is fitting that this forward-looking agenda was set during the 60th anniversary year of the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine, as a concrete realization of the "Shared Vision and Strategic Partnership" agreed last July between Secretary of State Rice and Minister of Foreign Affairs Gul. Our cooperation and partnership is built on deep political, security, and economic foundations; there is no limit to what we can achieve when the United States and Turkey work together. We are already marking some of our Action Plan tasks "done" and are planning the agenda for next year's meeting in Washington, which will of course include an important private sector component.

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